

# Agenda

## Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 31 March 2022**

---

Time: **2.30 pm**

---

Place: **The Conference Room, Herefordshire Council Offices,  
Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE**

---

Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

**Sarah Buffrey**

Tel: (01432) 260176

Email: [sarah.buffrey@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.buffrey@herefordshire.gov.uk)

---

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Sarah Buffrey on (01432) 260176 or e-mail [sarah.buffrey@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.buffrey@herefordshire.gov.uk) in advance of the meeting.

# **Agenda for the meeting of Cabinet**

## **Membership**

**Chairperson** Councillor David Hitchiner, Leader of the Council  
**Vice-Chairperson** Councillor Liz Harvey, Deputy Leader of the Council

**Councillor Ellie Chowns**  
**Councillor Pauline Crockett**  
**Councillor Gemma Davies**  
**Councillor John Harrington**  
**Councillor Diana Toynbee**  
**Councillor Ange Tyler**

## Agenda

		Pages
1.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	
2.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>To receive declarations of interests in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.</p>	
3.	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2022.</p>	11 - 22
<p><b>HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS</b></p> <p><i>The deadline for submission of questions for this meeting is:</i></p> <p><i>9:30am on Monday 28 March 2022.</i></p> <p><i>Questions must be submitted to <a href="mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk">councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>. Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted.</i></p> <p><i>Accepted questions and the response to them will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Further information and guidance is available at <a href="https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved">https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved</a></i></p>		
4.	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b></p> <p>To receive questions from members of the public.</p>	
5.	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS</b></p> <p>To receive questions from councillors.</p>	
6.	<p><b>MARKET TOWN INVESTMENT PLANS (MTIP'S) - TO APPROVE THE INVESTMENT PLANS</b></p> <p>To approve the Market Town Investment Plan (MTIP) for each of Herefordshire's market towns.</p>	23 - 216
7.	<p><b>DELIVERY PLAN 2022/23</b></p> <p>To agree proposals for the Delivery Plan 2022/23.</p>	217 - 264
8.	<p><b>HEREFORDSHIRE CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRANSFORMATION</b></p> <p>To request the drawdown from the Financial Resilience Reserve, a total of £11.49m to support the ongoing delivery of the Children's Services Improvement Plan.</p>	265 - 288
9.	<p><b>COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2022-2025</b></p> <p>This report recommends to Cabinet a revised Communications Strategy and associated protocols to help align corporate communications to improve the way the council communicates to residents and stakeholders.</p>	289 - 334





## The Public's Rights to Information and Attendance at Meetings

In view of the continued prevalence of covid-19, we have introduced changes to our usual procedures for accessing public meetings. These will help to keep our councillors, staff and members of the public safe.

Please take time to read the latest guidance on the council website by following the link at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings) and support us in promoting a safe environment for everyone. If you have any queries please contact the Governance Support Team on 01432 261699 or at [governancesupportteam@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:governancesupportteam@herefordshire.gov.uk)

We will review and update this guidance in line with Government advice and restrictions. Thank you for your help in keeping Herefordshire Council meetings safe.

### You have a right to:

- Attend all Council, Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting. Agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) are available at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings)
- Inspect minutes of the Council and all committees and sub-committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of Cabinet and of all Committees and Sub-Committees. Information about councillors is available at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors)
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title. Information about councillors is available at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors)
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50 for postage).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.

## **Recording of meetings**

Please note that filming, photography and recording of this meeting is permitted provided that it does not disrupt the business of the meeting.

Members of the public are advised that if you do not wish to be filmed or photographed you should let the governance services team know before the meeting starts so that anyone who intends filming or photographing the meeting can be made aware.

The reporting of meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the reporting to ensure that they comply.

The council may make a recording of this public meeting or stream it live to the council's website. Such recordings form part of the record of the meeting and are made available for members of the public via the council's web-site.

## **Public transport links**

The Herefordshire Council office at Plough Lane is located off Whitecross Road in Hereford, approximately 1 kilometre from the City Bus Station.

The location of the office and details of city bus services can be viewed at:

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services->

## Guide to Cabinet

The Executive or Cabinet of the Herefordshire Council consists of a Leader and Deputy Leader and six other Cabinet Members each with their own individual programme area responsibilities. The current Cabinet membership is:

Cllr David Hitchiner (Leader) (Independents for Herefordshire)	Corporate Strategy and Budget
Cllr Liz Harvey (Deputy Leader) (Independents for Herefordshire)	Finance, Corporate Services and Planning
Cllr Diana Toynbee (The Green Party)	Children's and Family Services, and Young People's Attainment
Cllr Gemma Davies (Independents for Herefordshire)	Commissioning, Procurement and assets
Cllr Ellie Chowns (The Green Party)	Environment and Economy
Cllr Pauline Crockett (Independents for Herefordshire)	Health and Adult Wellbeing
Cllr Ange Tyler (Independents for Herefordshire)	Housing, regulatory services, and community safety
Cllr John Harrington (Independents for Herefordshire)	Infrastructure and Transport

The Cabinet's roles are:

- To consider the overall management and direction of the Council. Directed by the Leader of the Council, it will work with senior managers to ensure the policies of Herefordshire are clear and carried through effectively;
- To propose to Council a strategic policy framework and individual strategic policies;
- To identify priorities and recommend them to Council;
- To propose to Council the Council's budget and levels of Council Tax;
- To give guidance in relation to: policy co-ordination; implementation of policy; management of the Council; senior employees in relation to day to day implementation issues;
- To receive reports from Cabinet Members on significant matters requiring consideration and proposals for new or amended policies and initiatives;
- To consider and determine policy issues within the policy framework covering more than one programme area and issues relating to the implementation of the outcomes of monitoring reviews.

### Who attends cabinet meetings?

	Members of the cabinet, including the leader of the council and deputy leader – these are the decision makers, only members of the cabinet can vote on recommendations put to the meeting.
	Officers of the council – attend to present reports and give technical advice to cabinet members
	Chairpersons of scrutiny committees – attend to present the views of their committee if it has considered the item under discussion
	Political group leaders attend to present the views of their political group on the item under discussion. Other councillors may also attend as observers but are not entitled to take part in the discussion.



**The Seven Principles of Public Life  
(Nolan Principles)**

**1. Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**2. Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**3. Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**4. Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**5. Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**6. Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

**7. Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



Herefordshire Council

**Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Conference Room, Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Thursday 24 February 2022 at 2.30 pm**

**Cabinet Members Physically Present and voting:** Councillor David Hitchiner, Leader of the Council (Chairperson)  
Councillor Liz Harvey, Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillors Ellie Chowns and Diana Toynbee

**Cabinet Members in remote attendance** Councillors Pauline Crockett, John Harrington and Ange Tyler

*Cabinet members attending the meeting remotely, e.g. through video conferencing facilities, may not vote on any decisions taken.*

Cabinet support members in attendance Councillors John Hardwick

Group leaders / representatives in attendance Councillors Toni Fagan, Terry James, Peter Jinman and Jonathan Lester

Scrutiny chairpersons in attendance Councillors Elissa Swinglehurst, Jonathan Lester and Phillip Howells

Officers in attendance: Chief Executive, Director of resources and assurance, Service Director - All Ages Commissioning, Corporate Director - Children & Young People, Interim head of legal services and Corporate Director - Economy and Environment

---o0o---

The leader of the council made an opening statement on the situation in Ukraine. He highlighted the county's long standing connection to workers from Eastern Europe, including Ukraine, and to the security industry. The leader offered, on behalf of the council, a message of solidarity and sympathy to all democratically elected representatives of the government and of councils across Ukraine and to the people of Ukraine whom they all serve and represent. The council's thoughts were also with the many residents of Herefordshire with friends and family in the region.

---o0o---

**84. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Gemma Davies.

**85. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor David Hitchiner declared a conflict of interest in agenda item 11 as a non-executive director of Hoople Ltd.

**86. MINUTES**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

**87. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 7 - 8)**

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 1 to the minutes.

**88. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (Pages 9 - 12)**

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 2 to the minutes.

**89. QUARTER 3 BUDGET & PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The cabinet member finance, corporate services and planning introduced the report. She highlighted the position in quarter 3 given continuing challenges from covid and that the council was working hard to improve the outturn position.

Group leaders presented the comments and queries of their group. It was noted that:

- The treasury management strategy was clear that the council only deposited money in banks with a strong credit rating, there had been some occasions where deposits had been in accounts with zero percent interest but rates had increased since then;
- The return of monies from phase 1a of the Green Homes Grant was disappointing but other authorities had also struggled to spend the grant due to a combination of a lack of local skills, supply chain issues for the type of work required and the stringent requirements on eligibility and spend deadlines, some of the funding had been reissued through the third phase grant and a different contractor was to be used for this phase to improve delivery;
- The capital programme had been reviewed in the autumn and adjusted to reflect difficulties in delivering schemes, partly due to covid. The report showed the variances against the adjusted programme;
- Additional project management support was being provided to progress work on section 106 projects;
- Several communities were still struggling to access broadband and further progress on the Fastershire contract would be welcomed;
- The current high rate of inflation would have an impact on the council's services and expenditure.

**It was resolved that:**

**Cabinet, having reviewed performance and financial forecast for year 2021/22 as set out in the appendices A-E, has not identified any additional actions to be considered to achieve future improvements.**

**90. CHILDREN'S IMPROVEMENT PLAN QUARTERLY UPDATE**

The cabinet member children and families introduced the report. She highlighted that this was the first in a series of quarterly updates on the improvement journey. The improvement plan was a live document and was in the process of being refreshed and simplified. The new version of the plan would be included with the next quarterly update.

Group leaders and representatives gave their comments and questions. It was noted that:

- There was still a long way to go and the council needed to remain vigilant in its assessment of progress;
- The next update would have much more detail, reflecting a new approach to data management and reporting;
- It was important to support staff working in this difficult area and recognise that they were experiencing considerable change.

The chairperson of the children and young people commented on the report, noting that progress was being made and a more bottom up focus on the experience of children and families was evident. He highlighted that the committee had received four detailed reports at its recent meeting, including a report on workforce issues.



**It was resolved that:**

**Cabinet members, having reviewed progress against the Children and Families Strategic Improvement Plan v1.0 following the 18th May 2021 DfE non-statutory notice to improve, have not identified any additional actions to support delivery of improvements.**

**91. MARKET TOWN INVESTMENT PLANS (MTIP'S) - TO APPROVE THE INVESTMENT PLANS**

*This item was deferred to the next meeting of Cabinet due to the upcoming by-election in the Bromyard West ward.*

**92. MAYLORD ORCHARD LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE (DETAILED DESIGN)**

The cabinet member environment and economy introduced the report. It was noted that this formed the next stage of the project and that while the library was based in the city, these services would be designed to support wider connections across the county.

Cabinet members welcomed the progress on the project but expressed frustration at the process for the stronger towns grant funding as a significant amount of investment was required upfront and this was a challenge for the many small and community groups involved in the Hereford Stronger Towns Partnership.

Group leaders and representatives gave the comments and queries from their groups. It was noted that:

- The project was widely supported;
- It was hoped that future capital investment would be spread across the county;
- It was important to have communities on board;
- The barriers to smaller groups were a concern but the council had to work with the system as it was.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) **The redevelopment of Maylord Orchards to create a new library and learning resource centre project is approved;**
- b) **Expenditure of up to £0.45m of the Maylord Orchard Library and Learning Resource Centre project capital programme allocation be approved to complete the detailed design stage of the project including seeking planning permission,; and**
- c) **The Corporate Director for Community and Wellbeing, following consultation with the Deputy Section 151 Officer and in consultation with the Cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets, be authorised take all operational decisions necessary to complete the detailed design stage and seek planning approval within the £0.45m approved budget.**

**93. HEREFORD MUSEUM & ART GALLERY (DETAILED DESIGN)**

The cabinet member environment and economy introduced the report. It was noted that this formed the next stage of the museum project and, as with the library project, these services would be designed to support wider connections across the county. The building would seek to achieve EnerPHit passive house environmental standards and would be a fantastic visitor attraction to add to the current offer.

Group leaders and representatives presented the comments and queries from their groups. The project was generally supported but there were concerns about the

challenges of adapting and maintaining heritage buildings and the timescales to deliver the project.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) **The redevelopment of the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery to create a new high quality visitor attraction project is approved;**
- b) **Expenditure of up to £1.5m of the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery (HMAG) redevelopment capital programme allocation be approved to complete the detailed design stage of the project including seeking planning permission; and**
- c) **The Director for Community and Wellbeing, following consultation with Deputy Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets, be authorised take all operational decisions necessary to complete the detailed design stage and seek planning approval within the £1.5m approved budget.**

**94. REGISTERED SERVICES TRANSFER TO HOOPLE LIMITED**

*Councillor Hitchiner declared a conflict of interest as a non-executive director of Hoople Ltd, relinquished the chair and left the room for the duration of this item.*

*The director of resources and assurance also declared a conflict of interest as a non-executive director of Hoople Ltd and left the room for the duration of this item.*

*(Councillor Harvey as deputy leader of the council assumed the chair for consideration of this item.)*

The cabinet member health and adult wellbeing introduced the report and set out the key objectives of the transfer.

Cabinet members noted that staff impacted by the transfer had been given prior notice and that the transfer was expected to build on the improvements that previous in-sourcing had already delivered. The transfer was a positive move for the council, the care services market and for Hoople in broadening its service base.

Group leaders and representatives presented the comments and queries of their groups. It was noted that:

- There was general support for the improvements to delivery of services;
- The audit and governance committee would have oversight of Hoople performance;
- Hoople Care would be quality assured in the same way as all independent providers;
- Hoople Care was expected to have lower operating costs than the council due to the fixed overheads.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) **Cabinet approves the formal transfer of registered social care provider services to Hoople Care, as part of Hoople Limited and;**
- b) **the transfer of council staff employed in the registered services to the employment of Hoople Ltd under TUPE regulations is approved and;**
- c) **Authority is delegated to the Acting Corporate Director for Community Wellbeing to make all operational arrangements necessary for the**

**implementation of the transfer, including the transfer of staff under TUPE regulations.**

*(Councillor Hitchiner resumed the chair.)*

**95. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CITIZENS CLIMATE ASSEMBLY**

The cabinet member environment and economy introduced the item. She thanked everyone who had participated in the citizens' climate assembly.

Cabinet members noted that:

- It was important to find new ways to engage with residents and stakeholders;
- The bar charts produced in the report set out clearly under three broad headings the ideas that assembly members had come up with and voted on;
- The next stage would be to develop project proposals to seek to deliver on the assembly's recommendations and the new homes bonus money for this year had been allocated to the climate reserve to provide funding;
- The assembly process had been rigorous in selecting a broad representation of the demography of the county and a spectrum of views.

Group leaders and representatives presented the comments and queries from their groups. It was noted that:

- Additional engagement was generally welcomed;
- The general scrutiny committee had considered recommendations from the climate change panel in January 2021 and these recommendations should be referred back to alongside the recommendations from the citizens' climate assembly;
- Some points raised by the climate assembly were challenged, for example the difficulties of rural areas needed to be recognised when seeking to avoid car dependency;
- It was queried whether the cost of running the assembly represented good value for money, in response it was highlighted that councillors voted unanimously to establish the citizens' climate assembly in 2019 and that the costs had come from existing consultation budgets;
- A new supplementary planning document was in development for environmental building standards and all stakeholders would be able to participate in the consultation process;
- It might not be possible for the council to take forward all of these recommendations but there was interest in seeing what would come forward.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) Receive and note with thanks the recommendations provided by the Citizens Climate Assembly;**
- b) Delegate responsibility to Corporate Director Economy & Environment and S151 officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment to allocate funding from the Climate Reserve to consider next steps and provide recommendations to Cabinet by April 2022;**
- c) Provide a progress report to the Citizens Climate Assembly in September 2022.**

The meeting ended at 4.22 pm

**Chairperson**



**PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 24 FEBRUARY 2022**

**Question 1**

**From: C Wood, Hereford**

**To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport**

Can the cabinet and Cllr Harrington confirm that they will look at investing in improving the pavements in our market towns as part of the Market Town Investment Plans (MTIP's) because I am aware that many of them in these locations are not currently accessible for those using wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

**Response**

The market town investment plans have identified a number of projects, including improvements to the public realm including refurbishment and improved accessibility for high streets. This will encourage people to use the high streets more and encourage further investment. There isn't yet funding allocated for this projects but Herefordshire Council will work with the town councils to get quality plans drawn up and will then seek to identify funding streams once Cabinet has approved them. We will make sure that accessibility for wheelchairs and mobility scooters is considered fully and that we design any public realms schemes with those considerations in mind.

*As the agenda item to which this question refers was deferred, any supplementary question will also be deferred to the next meeting.*



## COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 24 FEBRUARY 2022

### Question 1

**From Councillor Jeremy Milln, Central Ward**

**To: cabinet member, commissioning, procurement and assets**

For the Maylords library project, professional fees (£150k to RIBA 2 approved in Dec, £450k to RIBA 4 as per item 9 of today's Cabinet agenda and £156k to RIBA 6 as advised by officers) amount to around 25% of the £3m project which seems high given this is a refurb of existing, not a build from scratch. While some contingency for additional surveys etc may be prudent, can I have the cabinet member's assurance that every effort will be made to contain such costs to within the normal RIBA scale 10-15%?

### Response

For Maylords the total value of the project in grant funding terms is £7m, but the £4m as council match funding is the asset value of the shopping centre (as per the point of the leasehold acquisition). The ownership of the building/ site doesn't change in anyway. But we can count our ownership value of the site as match for the grant fund.

In terms of the design stage costs, there is an element of contingency as identified in your question to allow for any additional surveys/ investigations etc that we may need as the work progresses.

The design team and related survey works will be called off at each RIBA stage, and will be better known at the end of RIBA stage 2 when we have a concept design and outcome of the planning pre-app. Any contract award would be based on both cost and quality of the successful bid

We will ensure the design stage costs are kept to a minimum, and should be within the percentage levels you helpfully identify.

### Question 2

**From Councillor Yolande Watson, Kerne Bridge Ward**

**To: cabinet member, environment and economy**

Does Herefordshire Council carry out rural proofing exercise (such as a Rural Impact Assessment) on any of its policies, budgets or services?

### Response

Policy documents that are produced such as the emerging Local Plan are subject to a number of different appraisals but none that would match the definition of a Rural Impact Assessment.

In looking at the Lord Cameron Review into Rural Proofing implementation within government departments this was mainly concerned with the extent to which government departments had adopted and implemented the principles and guidance set out in the Rural Proofing materials published by DEFRA. The definition of Rural Impact Assessment or Rural Proofing as it is known defined by various rural action network

groups may be of more relevance to the policies, projects and programmes produced by the Council and we will therefore look to see how we can incorporate this approach into the work we are currently and planning to produce.

### **Question 3**

**From Councillor Nigel Shaw, Bromyard Bringsty Ward**

**To: cabinet member, commissioning, procurement and assets**

In welcoming the recent NMiTE student cohort to Hereford, can we be advised what the occupancy level at the student accommodation in Station Approach is and be reminded what the Council obligations are in respect of any under-occupancy? The cabinet member may wish to comment on any further plans for building student accommodation which was at one time so imperative to ensuring NMiTE's successful launch.

### **Response**

The Station Approach Student Accommodation is privately owned and operated by City Heart Living Partnerships. We understand that the current occupancy levels are 59% (105 of 178 rooms occupied). The council does not currently hold any liabilities in terms of under occupancy. Hereford College of Arts (HCA) hold the nominations rights and associated liabilities for 89 rooms for the first two years of operation, and then all 178 thereafter. The council has agreed a sub-nominations agreement (and related liabilities) with NMiTE for the remaining 89 rooms for the first two years of operation until HCA has the rights to all of the available rooms.

In terms of the future development of accommodation, at this stage there is no immediate requirement. We understand NMiTE's current intake and short term forecast growth can currently be met by Station Approach as well as their own separate agreements with other private providers. HCA have indicated the 178 rooms in Station Approach is likely to meet their needs in the short term. The Hereford City Masterplan will consider the need for additional student accommodation in the medium to long term.

### **Supplementary question**

You state that the Council does not currently hold any liabilities in respect of under-occupancy but does not state whether there any circumstances which might give rise to a liability being crystallised. Would this potential [be] contained within a schedule of underwritten soft loans and potential liabilities and where can a member or the external auditor inspect this schedule?

### **Response**

A written response was promised to the supplementary question and supplied as follows:

On the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019 the Cabinet member corporate strategy and budget took the following decision to support the development of the student accommodation on the Station Approach site, which we inherited from your previous administration: [Decision - Development and regeneration programme project approval for student accommodation at Station Approach - Herefordshire Council](#). The decision includes the long term lease (125 years with a break clause at 50 years) of the council owned land at market value, the council providing a guarantor for the M&G loan to City Heart



Living Partnerships, and the guarantor to the 50 year nominations agreement to Hereford College of Arts for the first six years of the nominations agreement.

The council retained nomination rights for half of the rooms (89) for the first three years of operation, although this latterly became 2 years due to the delays in constructing the building. These rooms has been previously agreed to provide initial student accommodation for NMiTE during the start-up phase of its operation.

Through the delegation granted in the June decision, the Director for Economy and Place then entered the respective contracts on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019 [Decision - Student accommodation on Station Approach final project approval - Herefordshire Council](#), and the sub-nominations agreement with NMiTE for the retained 89 rooms on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020 [Decision - Station Approach Nominations Agreement with New Model Institute in Technology and Engineering - Herefordshire Council](#).

No soft loans have been provided by the council related to the development.

Should City Heart Living Partnerships fail, the council would assume ownership of the building and responsibility for the operation in order to repay the M&G loan.





## Market Town Investment Plans

**Meeting: Cabinet**

**Meeting date: Thursday 31 March 2022**

**Report by: Cabinet member environment and economy**

### **Classification**

Open

### **Decision type**

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

### **Wards affected**

Bromyard Bringsty; Bromyard West; Kington; Ledbury North; Ledbury South; Ledbury West; Leominster East; Leominster North & Rural; Leominster South; Leominster West; Ross East; Ross North; Ross West;

### **Purpose**

To approve the Market Town Investment Plan (MTIP) for each of Herefordshire's market towns. Through local engagement each MTIP identifies the vision for the future economic development of the town together with a programme of potential projects that support the delivery of the vision. To approve next steps in the development of business projects that have been identified and prioritised by stakeholders as part of the MTIP review process in order to seek the funding from the most appropriate source.

## Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The market town investment plans (MTIPs) in appendices 1 to 5 to the report are approved and adopted as providing direction for the identification of future economic development projects in the market towns;**
- b) **The MTIPs be used to guide the council’s capital investment in market towns, which will support the economic recovery and development of the market towns; and**
- c) **The Director for Economy and Place, following consultation with the Section 151 officer and the Cabinet member for Environment and Economy is delegated authority to take all operational decisions required to implement the above recommendations.**

## Alternative options

1. The council could decide not to approve the MTIPs. This option is not recommended due to the loss of an opportunity to both support the economic growth of the Herefordshire market towns, as well as the loss of development of employment land and potential loss to co-ordinate investment which could delay the council’s COVID-19 recovery plan and risks not meeting the objectives of the council’s County Plan.
2. The council could decide to not take forward the development of projects identified as potentially suitable for funding. However, this is not recommended as the need for additional employment land in the market towns, identified in the Core Strategy (2011 to 2031)<sup>1</sup> has not been met by the market. The projects identified by local stakeholders through the development of each MTIP offer the most likely schemes to start to meet the requirement for employment land in the market towns.

## Key considerations

3. The market towns are a key part of the Herefordshire economy and have an important role to play in the economic development of the county. The County Plan 2020 to 2024 recognises the important role of the towns and states “*Our ambition is for Herefordshire to be an exemplar of 21st century rural living where market towns and rural communities are properly valued and recognised for the contributions they make to the success of the county*”<sup>2</sup>. The Plan further states “*We want to emphasise the critical role the market towns and villages play in Herefordshire’s economy and we will ensure high quality employment land, business space and business support is made available throughout the county*”.
4. In support of this strategic aim, the council’s corporate Delivery Plan 2020 to 2022 includes the following action EC2.2: Develop & implement Market Town Economic Development Investment Plans for each of the five market towns

---

<sup>1</sup> Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 to 2031, adopted 16 October 2015

<sup>2</sup> Herefordshire Council County Plan 2020 to 2024, February 2020

(Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, Bromyard, Kington) to support recovery, growth and jobs.

5. In September 2020, the council commissioned Rose Regeneration to develop, through local engagement, 'bottom up' Market Town Economic Development Investment Plans for each of the five market towns: Leominster; Ross-on-Wye; Ledbury; Bromyard; and Kington.
6. The aim of the commission was to: *“develop a coherent set of investment plans through local engagement with market town councils and stakeholders to identify a longer term vision for the growth of the towns to enable sustainable economic development to meet the towns’ visions.”*<sup>3</sup>
7. Each MTIP is underpinned by an evidence base indicating the economic situation in each town, and is based on extensive local stakeholder engagement. Each MTIP identifies a wide range of potential pipeline projects to support economic development and delivery of each town’s vision. An indication of the impact of each potential project was analysed using the theory of change and, where appropriate, the MTIP identifies potential sources of funding, including: opportunities for external grant funding, institutional funding, or council funding. The MTIPs will, therefore, guide capital investment in market towns and support their economic recovery and development.
8. Overall, the development of the MTIPs has highlighted that there has been a long-term lack of investment in the five market towns with the suggestion that most require significant enhancement to infrastructure, public realm, shop front/building etc. in creating the conditions for growth. Establishing a clear strategic rationale, local evidence base, and identification of prioritised projects with local stakeholders means the county is now well placed to seek support through future rounds of government funding, such as the Levelling up Funds, UK Shared Prosperity Funding or Future Towns Funding.
9. The council is committed to working with local partners to help take forward the projects, seeking the funds required including external grants and council funding. Subject to approval of the plans, the council will identify a lead member of the Economic Development Team to work with each town in identifying sources of, and applying for, potential grant funds to support the implementation of the MTIPs.
10. The MTIPs aim to increase the overall level of inward investment accessible to the market towns beyond that available through the council. This is achieved by these plans providing a firm foundation for parish and community-led applications for grants to funding bodies beyond the reach of the council. The vision and objectives in the plans will provide an evidence base and clear context for such grant schemes, showing how each project will contribute to the economic development of the town and improving the likelihood that such applications will succeed. The council is committed to using the MTIPs to support these parish and community-led grant applications.

---

<sup>3</sup> CONSULTANCY AGREEMENT between HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL and ROSE REGENERATION LTD For the provision of Consultancy Services for Market Towns Investment Plans; 22 September 2020

11. A key aspect of economic development in the market towns is the availability of employment land. The table below shows a summary of the delivery of additional employment land in the market towns versus the requirement identified in the Core Strategy up to 2031.

<b>Market Town</b>	<b>Additional employment land requirement</b>	<b>Additional employment land (sites over 1Ha)</b>	<b>Permission / planned development</b>	<b>Impacted by Nutrient Management Plan****</b>
Leominster	10 Ha	None	None	Yes
Ross-on-Wye	10 Ha	None	10 Ha***	No
Ledbury	15 Ha	None	3 Ha**	No
Bromyard	5 Ha*	None	0.8 Ha**	Yes
Kington	Small scale employment and home working	N/A	None	Yes

Notes:

\* A revised forecast requirement of 2 Ha was provided in the Bromyard Employment Land Study, June 2019

\*\* Permission for the development of 3 Ha of employment land in the conditions for building 625 dwellings in Ledbury; 0.8 Ha of employment land including the erection of the first unit was included in conditions for the Porthouse Rise scheme – one unit was built but is still unused

\*\*\* Planning permission granted for 10 Ha of employment land at Hildersley – Ross Enterprise Park – site is not currently being developed

\*\*\*\* Any development in these market towns will have to demonstrate 'nutrient neutrality' which will add to the cost of any proposed scheme

12. In summary, in the period since 2011, there has been no significant (sites > 1 Ha) development of employment land in the market towns. However, there is an identified requirement for the period 2011 to 2031 of 40 Ha.
13. The council's capital programme includes an allocation for 'employment land and incubator space in market towns' (ELIS). The objective of the ELIS funding is to provide sufficient employment land and business premises to support business growth in the market towns.
14. The MTIPs have identified that in the majority of the towns there is a demand for additional employment land. For example, stakeholder feedback in Ross-on-Wye was that the lack of employment land is a significant barrier to growth, limiting business expansion and forcing existing or potentially new businesses to look elsewhere, often out of the county. As above, the Core Strategy has identified a clear need for additional employment land in the market town. However, the lack of almost any private sector led provision suggests there is a market failure in the commercial provision of these services.
15. Project definitions and initial draft business cases have been developed for projects identified through the MTIP process with the potential to deliver new employment land and business incubator space. However, further work is required to gather the evidence needed to develop Outline Business Cases and assess the feasibility and financial prospects of these projects.
16. At this stage, two of the projects from the MTIPs are likely to contribute to the ELIS economic objectives while having the potential to meet the ELIS capital requirements. Further feasibility studies will be required to assess their fit with the ELIS capital programme allocation i.e. the potential to generate an income to repay borrowing or generate land receipts:

- a. a potential mixed development on the council's Model Farm site in Ross-on-Wye (Appendix 1); and
  - b. the development of land in Ledbury currently owned by Heineken (Appendix 2).
- 17. The other identified projects are unlikely to be viable without grant support. Those that are likely to meet the requirements of government funding programmes will be developed in anticipation of calls for project applications.

## Community impact

- 18. Herefordshire's market towns play a critical role in the county's economy as focal points for employment; for retail/ tourism/ leisure/culture; for business investment and growth; for housing and for access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford.
- 19. The development of the MTIPs has been led by stakeholders in each of the market towns, supported by Rose Regeneration and the council. The MTIPs have identified a range of potential projects that are important to the economic development of the market towns.
- 20. The County Plan 2020 to 2024 states that: *"We shall also build new community facilities and bring forward new employment sites throughout the county. In making these investments we will continue to balance environmental, economic and community returns and will carry forward measures which further manage demand for our services."*
- 21. The current review of Herefordshire's Core Strategy is about to commission an employment land review. This will provide evidence for the economic policy direction of the revised Local Plan Core Strategy and determine the likely future demands for additional employment land provision in the county and how to ensure that employment proposals come forward. The ELIS projects are one potential component of meeting the future demand for employment land.

## Environmental Impact

- 22. The Core Strategy 2011 to 2031 recognised that: *"Sustainable communities need economic growth to ensure they are active and thriving. Wealth underpins social and cultural activities and the conservation of our environment. Ensuring a strong and diverse economy will help give people in Herefordshire more opportunities for work within the county, which could reduce the number of people needing to travel outside the county, thus helping to reduce carbon emissions and increasing the prosperity of Herefordshire residents."*
- 23. Identifying potential economic development projects and schemes to develop employment land and incubation space locally in the market towns has the

potential to contribute to the reduction in the amount that people have to travel to work.

24. While this decision will not directly result in schemes being commissioned by the council, any future developments will be designed to deliver the council's environmental policy commitments and contribute to the environmental success measures in the County Plan.

## Equality duty

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

25. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires the council to consider how the council can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that the council are paying 'due regard' in decision making, in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this is a decision to adopt the MTIPs and assess the feasibility of the projects identified as potentially meeting the ELIS criteria, it is not believed that it will have an impact on the council's equality duty at this stage. An equality impact assessment (EqIA) has been carried out on the development of the MTIPs and is included in Appendix 6 and EqIAs will be carried out for any projects taken forward as part of the ELIS project.

## Resource implications

26. The revenue costs identified below relate to the development of feasibility studies to support MTIP projects. A specific revenue allocation was made to the Economic Development base budget by Cabinet to support the development of projects<sup>4</sup>. This will be used to bring forward the proposed technical feasibility works which will be procured in line with the council's Contracts Procedure Rules.

---

<sup>4</sup> Budget and Corporate Plan, Herefordshire Council Cabinet - Thursday 30 January 2020



<b>Revenue cost of project</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Future Years</b>	<b>Total</b>
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Business Case Development</i>		100,000	100,000		200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		100,000	100,000		200,000

<b>Revenue budget implications</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Future Years</b>	<b>Total</b>
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Economy and Place</i>		100,000	100,000		200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		100,000	100,000		200,000

## Legal implications

27. The MTIPs are high level direction-setting documents and have no formal status. Any of the projects proposed in the MTIP will be subject to a further decision and therefore there are no legal implications arising from this report.

## Risk management

28. The following are the primary risks in delivering this decision:

<b>Risk / Opportunity</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<p>There is a risk of reputational damage to the council as stakeholders may expect all projects identified as a priority to be funded by the council.</p> <p>However, funding available from the council generally, including for the MTIP projects, is constrained.</p> <p>The ELIS funding, for example, will be allocated on the condition that any projects funded will generate an income or capital receipt to repay the investment, or be successful in attracting grant /additional funding to fill any gap.</p>	<p>The purpose of the MTIPs has been clearly communicated at each stage, including the need for any ELIS funded projects to be able to generate a return to repay the investments. This is also clearly stated in the MTIPs.</p> <p>Regular stakeholder consultation sessions were held. Ward members attended each relevant market town stakeholders group.</p> <p>The fact that not all projects are suitable for capital spend was clearly communicated to the stakeholders.</p>

<p>Local stakeholders may not agree with the priorities identified in the plans</p>	<p>The MTIPs have identified a wide range of proposed projects to support the growth of each town through local engagement and consultation.</p> <p>Stakeholders were invited to moderated sessions to discuss and agree a prioritised list of projects.</p> <p>Final drafts of the reports have been shared with Town Councils.</p>
<p>Funding may not be available for identified schemes</p>	<p>The MTIP process has established an informed pipeline / prospectus of projects with a clear strategic rationale and evidence base to support future grant applications for government funding.</p> <p>While funding may not be immediately available for all the projects on the MTIPs, the plans are intended to support applications for current and future grant funding (as it becomes available). They are, therefore, intended to maximise the likelihood of successful grant applications in the future.</p> <p>Initial project descriptions have been drafted for each of the relevant ELIS capital projects. Further technical work and advice is required in order to develop the outline business cases and assess deliverability.</p>
<p>Phosphates risk in the County affecting the progression of certain projects.</p> <p>This is likely to affect North Herefordshire for 3 years.</p> <p>The main risk is that there will be a small increase in costs to obtain phosphate credits. The moratorium on planning permissions is expected to be lifted when the Integrated Wetlands mitigation scheme (phosphate credits) is in place at the end of 2021.</p>	<p>The council is working to mitigate the impact through the construction and management of integrated wetlands.</p> <p>It is anticipated that developments in the area will be able to buy 'phosphate credits' to contribute to the wetland scheme to ensure that the development maintains 'nutrient neutrality'. Schemes offering to contribute will then be considered for approval. The phosphate credit scheme is expected to be in place later in the year of 2021.</p>

There is, however, a more remote risk that the moratorium on planning will continue for longer than anticipated if the Integrated Wetland project is delayed.

The wetland project will be managed according to the council's project management regime in order to minimise the risk of delay.

29. These risks will be managed at a service level and added to relevant risk registers as required or escalated if appropriate and required.

## Consultees

30. This proposal has been developed in conjunction with Economy and Place directorate teams, Property Services, and the Finance and Programme Management Office teams. Legal Services have also been consulted.
31. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy has been involved in the process and consulted on the report.
32. Stakeholders in the market towns have been consulted throughout the process of developing the MTIP documents, including Town Councils, Ward members, local business and organisation leaders and owners, land and business owners, as well as charities and other employment support agencies.
33. Political Group Consultation and full Council briefing has taken place and those that responded were supportive of the proposals.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Leominster Market Town Investment Plan
- Appendix 2 – Ross-on-Wye Market Town Investment Plan
- Appendix 3 – Ledbury Market Town Investment Plan
- Appendix 4 – Bromyard Market Town Investment Plan
- Appendix 5 – Kington Market Town Investment Plan
- Appendix 6 – Equality Impact Assessment

## Background papers

None identified.

**Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**

ELIS	Employment Land and Incubation Space project
MTIP	Market Town Investment Plan
PMO	Project Management Office



# *Leominster Town Economic Investment Plan*



## ***Leominster Town Economic Investment Plan Statement 2021***

*Leominster aspires to be a model 21st century market town, building on its unique heritage, pivotal location and innate potential to create an ambitious and sustainable future.*

*At the heart of our vision is an inclusive and prosperous mixed economy which supports its residents and welcomes inward investment and new business creation in a stunning and affordable rural environment.*

*We will collaborate with others to develop lifelong analogue and digital skills, to create a thriving visitor economy and to realise our full potential as a cohesive and dynamic community.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Background	6
The Vision for Leominster	14
The Main Challenges Facing the Town	15
The Town's Assets and Strengths	15
Spatial Context	15
Stakeholder Engagement	17
Theory of Change	17
Projects	20
Appendix 1 – Strategic Context Summary	34
Appendix 2 – Project Prioritisation	35
Appendix 3 - Key Employment Sectors	37

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Market Town Investment Plans

This Leominster Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans (MTIPs) commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Leominster, play a critical role in the county's economy, as focal points for employment; for retail, tourism, leisure and culture; for business investment and growth; for housing; and for access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The MTIPs will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

## The Vision for Leominster

The key strategic objectives are for Leominster to:

- share its heritage and welcome visitors;
- commit to sustainable growth; and
- build on its strategic location on the Welsh border and in the Marches

## The Main Challenges facing the town

Leominster has a particular challenge with the skill levels of its working population and has a modestly smaller stock of jobs per capita than Herefordshire average. Wages are lower than the UK average and unemployment, which is higher than the UK average, increased during the pandemic.

There are a significantly higher proportion of low value properties than the national average in the town. Its public realm and amenities are in poor condition and the visitor economy is weak compared to the UK average.

## The Town's Assets and Strengths

Leominster has the second largest urban population in Herefordshire and is in a strategic location on crossroads of A49 and A44 with access to Wales and central location in the Marches. It has a railway station with good connectivity to Hereford and Shrewsbury and Cardiff and Manchester beyond.

The town has a wealth of heritage buildings which has been recognised by Historic England in awarding the town Heritage Action Zone Status with a substantial funding allocation. The town's heritage and strong antiques sector have the potential to attract a substantial number of tourists.

With the right investment, the strong manufacturing sector with a pool of skilled manual labour, excellent digital connectivity and well performing schools offer a strong base on which Leominster can build.



## Issues in Leominster

Issues in Leominster	Targets
Weak visitor economy	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within 10 years
Low stock of jobs/ Employment opportunities	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Low income Levels	
Low skills base	Skill levels to rise to national average over the next 10 years
Low Population of younger people of working age	Within 15 years a redistributed economic profile providing scope for young people to have an economic stake in the town and older people to live there independently and successfully
Improved housing offer	Leominster works effectively as a key visitor and living destination based on a town centre which works better and attracts more commercial investment
Poor quality of public realm	
Carbon management	Within 10 years carbon emissions to be reduced by 50%

## Project summary

The MTIP identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town's vision. These include:

Development of employment opportunities including new employment land and incubator space for new and expanding businesses:

- Facilitation of Marsh Court the Former Dales site
- Old Priory development after its community asset transfer
- Leominster Enterprise Park Extension
- Leominster Incubation Hub

Improvements to support the visitor economy and transport in the town:

- Leominster Railway Station/Mobi Hub
- Worcester Bromyard Leominster Greenway
- Corn Square (part of Heritage Action Zone)
- Shop/building frontage grant scheme (Part of Hereford Action Zone)
- Leominster Fire Station relocation and redevelopment / Leominster Watercourse Project / The Grange Masterplan
- Food and Drink Attraction
- Visitor Accommodation

Skills Development and projects aimed at young people

- The Skills Foundry

The MTIP shows how each of these projects contribute to the delivery of Leominster's Vision. It will provide a platform for successful funding bids as suitable funding opportunities become available.

Herefordshire Council will continue to work with Leominster Town Council and other local stakeholders to identify new project and funding opportunities, carry out feasibility and foundation work, and support local organisations to apply for funding.

## BACKGROUND

This Leominster Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Leominster, play a critical role in the county's economy, as focal points for employment; for retail, tourism, leisure and culture; for business investment and growth; for housing; and for access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The MTIPs will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

### Community Including the Impact of Covid-19

The damage to the economy and to health from Covid-19 has been felt across Herefordshire. During 2020 and the early part of 2021, the pandemic reached all corners of the county and has had an impact on every community. During 2020, the UK economy contracted by 9.9%.(Office for National Statistics<sup>1</sup>). It remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be, but within many sectors we are likely to see a shift to working, learning and engaging in commerce remotely on digital platforms.

The projects proposed in this Plan have been developed through engagement with key stakeholders in Leominster and will help the town to attract essential investment as the need to promote recovery opens up new funding opportunities.

Attitudes towards working from home have changed substantially since the start of the COVID pandemic and many workers may continue to work from home long after it has ended.

There could be positive implications for Herefordshire's market towns in what is being termed 'hybrid working'. The Centre for Towns recently reported that its research indicates "big potential for places to market themselves as online working destinations" as predictions indicate that the longer people are required to work at home, the greater the adoption of home working will be beyond the current situation.

The best performing towns are ones with a healthy mix of agegroups and professional types. An increase in home working would have a significant positive impact in rebalancing Herefordshire's market towns demographics and towns should therefore actively promote themselves to attract in and retain a thriving working age population.

Towns will need to work closely with Herefordshire Council to ensure that digital connectivity is adequate to support the needs of home workers. Clearly Herefordshire market towns have a significant 'quality of life' offer, with a good range of local services.

### Climate and Ecological Emergency

On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council. This declaration was subsequently

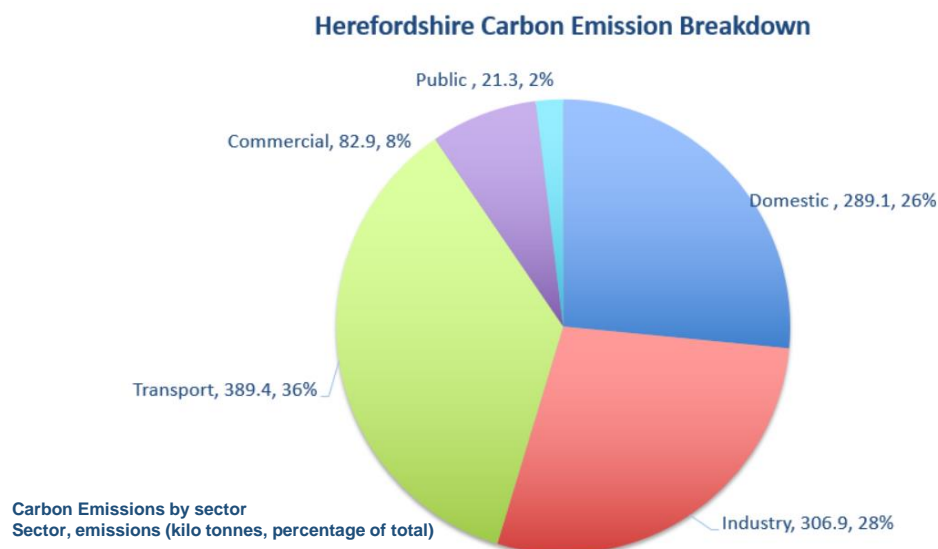
---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/articles/dashboardunderstandingtheukeconomy/2017-02-22>

updated and strengthened on 11 December 2020 when Herefordshire Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) following support for a climate and ecological emergency resolution at full council.

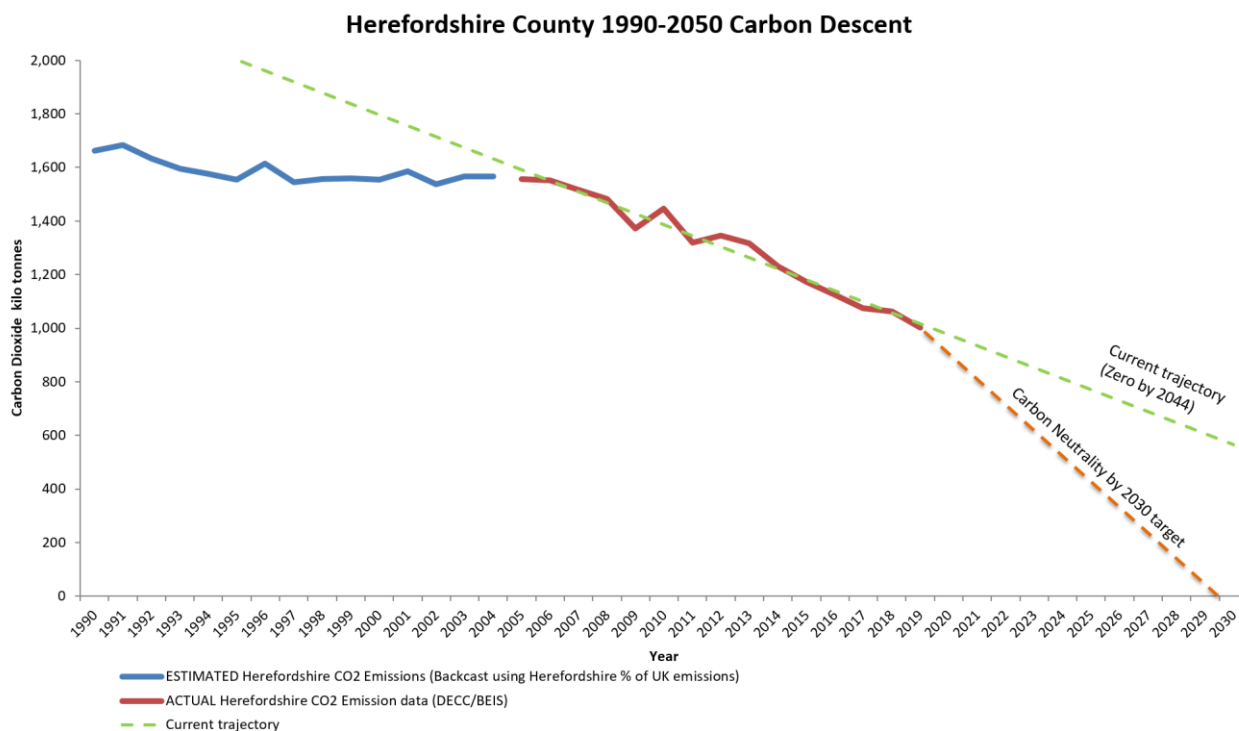
Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

The below chart illustrates Herefordshire's current carbon emission split and the areas of focus for the Leominster MTIP to support the Herefordshire's journey to net zero.



In order to achieve this target, as illustrated below, a new Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership and Board have been established to catalyse and coordinate new action across the County. These actions have been grouped into a series of six different action plans including: Housing & Buildings; Transport; Energy; Farming & Land Use; Waste and Food.

The details of the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership, including the six themed action plans are set out: <https://zerocarbon.herefordshire.gov.uk/>



As a key strategic plan the Leominster MTIP is strongly committed to delivering Herefordshire’s net zero and nature rich commitment and will work in partnership with its communities, businesses and the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Board to achieve this through the development and delivery of the plan.

### Economy

Herefordshire faces a number long term economic challenges such as the lowest level of productivity of any county in England<sup>2</sup>, a low wage economy (19% below the national average<sup>3</sup>), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%<sup>4</sup>), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits<sup>5</sup>).

However, the county has a significant number of opportunities, including local strengths in food and drink, tourism, and agriculture, specialisms in fast growing global markets like cyber security, an outstanding quality of life, and new University (New Model Institute in Technology and Engineering). The county is also very well placed to benefit from a post Covid lifestyle trend, as people now look to increasingly work remotely away from populated cities to locations offering a better quality of life.

The market towns have a crucial role to play in addressing the long term economic challenges, and realising the county’s many opportunities. They are key local centres for housing, culture, access to public services, tourism, with strong local communities and identities. Establishing great vibrant places to live and meaningful employment opportunities will be key to stemming the aging population, in retaining/ attracting younger generations to study, live and work in the county for generations to come.

<sup>2</sup> [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)

Leominster is particularly well placed to realise some of these opportunities, significantly contributing the future economic success of the county as a whole. A highly attractive and popular market town, offering a great place to live, visit and work.

As people's approach to work and quality of life requirements change, Leominster is well placed to benefit from an increasing transition to a digital economy, with people working from home or flexible workspaces in attractive, less densely populated locations away from city centres.

The Plan identifies a vision for growth and a programme of investment projects required to deliver the vision and support the economic development of Leominster over the next fifteen years. Funding from many different sources will be needed to achieve them. The Plan identifies the timetable for delivery, lead body and potential sources of investment for each of the projects.

## Tourism and the Visitor Economy

Visit Herefordshire through its Post Covid Tourism Recovery Strategy has taken the opportunity to re-energise and provide effective and strategic co-ordination to a sector that has been significantly underperforming for some time. The latest STEAM (Tourism Economic Impact Model) report for 2020 indicated a 54% drop in visitor spend due to Covid 19.

Tourism development and promotion in the county have historically been fragmented and largely product rather than market led which has failed to deliver the required scale of effort and investment in tourism promotion and management and which is clearly beyond the resources and capabilities of individual market towns.

A new cross county and cross sector Tourism Steering Group has been established to develop a marketing plan and has begun implementation of PR and Social Media campaigns, including an autumn and winter marketing campaign and an interim refresh of the Visit Herefordshire web site. A full rebranding with new website and national advertising campaigns will follow and profiles the key target audiences under the categories:

- Cultural Explorers
- Active Explorers
- Active Families
- Millennials and Generation Y

## Tourism projects and the Market Town Investment Plans

Across the market towns there is great opportunity for collaboration and joint working. The expansion of town markets, tourist trails for walking and cycling, the direct link to local food and drink production, festivals, promotion and the development of accommodation all feature to some extent in each investment plan.

It will be essential for towns and their tourism stakeholders and promoters to actively engage in strategic collaboration with the county-wide representative bodies in order to gain traction and commitment of resources to individual projects.

Market towns have proposed a number of tourism related projects within their Investment Plans and these must be considered and developed in the light of the emerging strategy. Specifically, market towns must consider their tourism projects as economic contributors that will enable the sector as a whole to push visitor spend in Herefordshire up to the UK average.

## The local economy, manufacturing and other sectors

Leominster has a strong manufacturing tradition and skilled manual base. In common with the rest of the county the economy is characterised by high rates of self-employment and a large number of micro businesses with some 90% of businesses employing nine people or less<sup>6</sup> and has better than average survival rates for new start-ups. Like the rest of Herefordshire, the town has relatively low levels of unemployment, but low productivity and lower average earnings are persistent challenges and a factor in poor social mobility and young people leaving the county to seek career opportunities elsewhere. Three of Leominster's LSOA's Leominster Ridgemoor, Grange and Gateway are within the 25% most deprived in the country in relation to employment and income deprivation.

Whilst the town has a large industrial estate and other employment areas there is a shortage of available employment land, units and business start-up space. There is an opportunity to build on the strengths in the town by providing the right premises for business to start-up grow and thrive,

The care sector is important to the town with many jobs in health and social care and there is a need to recognise the skills needs in this sector as demand continues to increase linked to an ageing population.

Retail continues to be an important sector for the town. The growth of the town requires a strong retail offer in order to retain and attract expenditure from the residents in the local catchment. Whilst the Core Strategy is now under review it has identified that Leominster has some convenience and comparison retail floorspace need which increases over the plan period. In terms of convenience retail, this could create the opportunity for an additional food store development in the town centre, which would draw more shoppers into the centre and complement the existing independent convenience shops. Small scale convenience retail will be provided within the urban extension to meet the day to day needs of the residents of the new development. The Core Strategy indicates priority should be to steer any new floorspace to the town centre as far as this is practical, and only to permit out of centre facilities if they would materially enhance the retail offer of the town. Relatively low rentals for retail premises have encouraged some retail start-ups in the Town over the last period.

## Digital Connectivity

Faster broadband is being rolled out across Herefordshire and Gloucestershire by the Fastershire broadband project. From a starting point in 2012 of only 0.6 percent of premises in Herefordshire with superfast broadband (30Mbps and above), there are now over 92 percent of premises in the county with access to superfast broadband.

Fastershire is a partnership between Herefordshire Council, Gloucestershire County Council and national Government. This is part of a commitment to the digital transformation of Herefordshire, which is vital for the future of our local economy and those who live and work in our communities.

Fastershire is not just about technology. The project also includes social and digital inclusion activities, and an extensive business support programme, designed to help small and medium size businesses get the most from fibre broadband and be more competitive.

As people's approach to work and quality of life requirements change, the market towns are well placed to benefit from an increasing transition to a digital economy, with people working

---

<sup>6</sup> [Economy & place - Understanding Herefordshire](#)



from home or flexible workspaces in attractive, less densely populated locations away from city centres.

In considering how we enable the growth of Herefordshire's economy as a whole, we need to consider the essential current and future role of the market towns in creating and supporting sustainable higher value employment opportunities for local residents.

The Plan identifies a vision for growth and a programme of investment projects required to deliver the vision and support the economic development of Leominster over the next fifteen years. Funding from many different sources will be needed to achieve them. The Plan identifies the timetable for delivery, lead body and potential sources of investment for each of the projects.

## Leominster

Leominster is a typical English market town, with a population of 12,400 within the town itself (2019 ONS estimate). It is located approximately twelve miles to the north of Hereford and is the centre for many parishes in the north of the county of Herefordshire, as well as several local villages in neighbouring Shropshire. Taken together with the population in Leominster itself the wider area served by the town has an estimated population of 16,500.

The town has the potential to be a key tourist destination with a history dating back to the seventh century. The historic buildings and narrow streets in the town centre retain many Medieval and Tudor features. Other historic attractions include but are not limited to Leominster Priory Church, Leominster Museum and Grange Court.

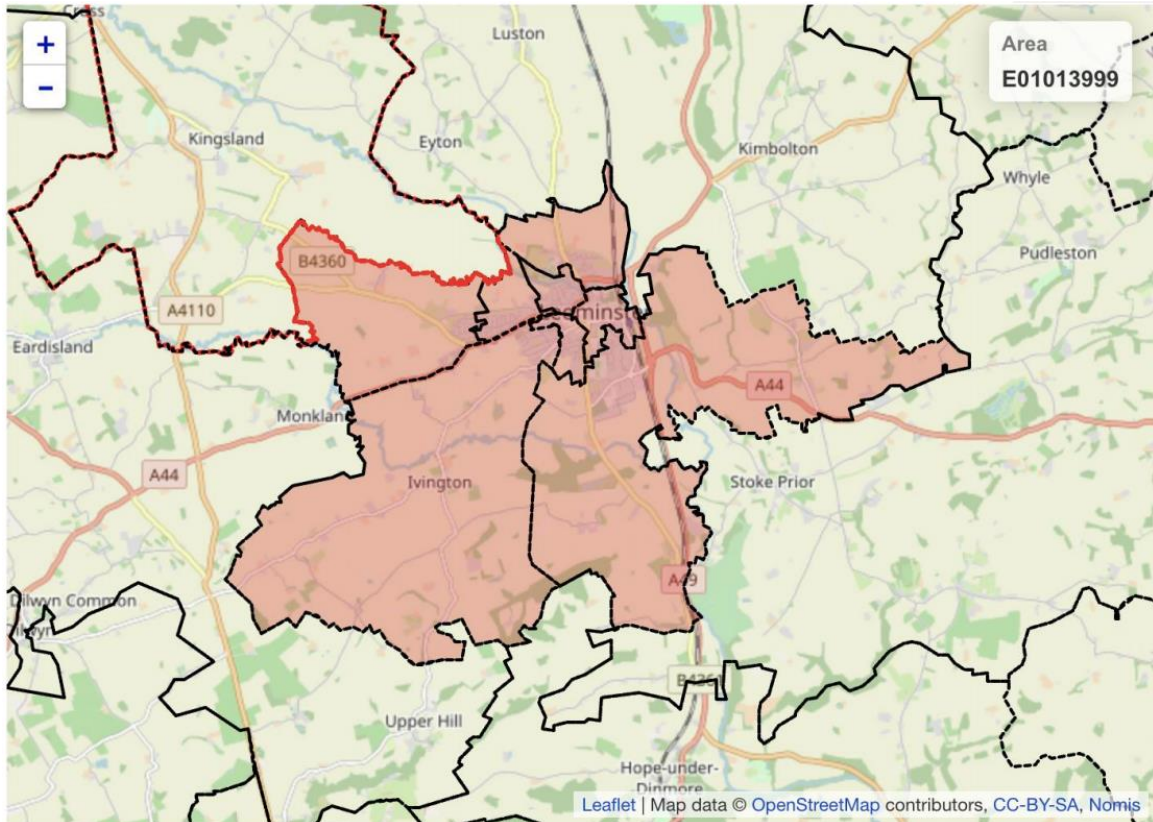
The town is bisected by the A44 which was formerly a trunk road and still provides an important cross regional route for long distance freight, commercial and tourist traffic from mid Wales to the West Midlands.

Leominster is a compact town with all areas well within 2 miles travel. The centre is flat with generous green spaces. Walking and cycling are highly practical for journeys to work, and to socialise and network. Currently the infrastructure for cycling is patchy and poorly marked and many pavements are uneven and in poor repair. Investment in improving walking and cycling routes in the town centre and out to the industrial and main housing estates have economic benefits by making the town more attractive to remote workers, professionals and businesses looking for good quality of life and reliable fast internet. Improving the infrastructure for walking and cycling will help make the town more attractive, improve fitness, reduce congestion and improve air quality on major routes. There are many relatively low-cost active travel projects that would have good economic impact such as an active travel link between Southern Avenue and the Enterprise Park. The Leominster Transport Plan provides some helpful context on commuting patterns and transport solutions to support the town's economy.

Leominster town centre is home to a variety of retail businesses and hosts a regular weekly market. The town is identified as one of the five market towns in the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy to have a good provision of independent retailers. Leominster is a location for food shopping and services for residents and those living nearby. Its historic environment and niche retail offer also makes it an attractive destination for visitors. Through the excellent work of the Fastershire Broadband initiative mentioned above Leominster is on target to be one of the first fully (FFTP) Full Fibre to The Premise towns in the UK making digital connectivity being a real strength for the town going forward.

It is widely accepted that improving the town centre and making it an attractive destination for both residents, those living in the local catchment of the town and visitors will benefit the local economy and promote future growth within the town.

For the purpose of this work, Leominster's town boundaries are those based on the Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA's) for Leominster we have used to inform the data analysis based on the 2019 Indices of Deprivation. The work has also been cognisant of the boundaries set out in the Leominster Neighbourhood Plan and Leominster Town Policies map in the Herefordshire Core Strategy. The LSOA boundaries used for analysis describe the following map set out below:

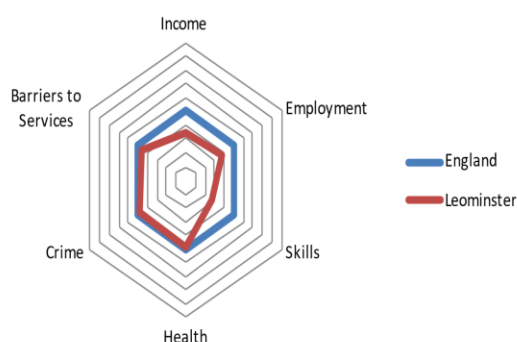




# English Indices of Deprivation 2019

## Leominster

## Domains of Deprivation



Domains	England Average	Leominster
Income	16422	11143
Employment	16422	12253
Skills	16422	9245
Health	16422	15756
Crime	16422	15610
Barriers to Services	16422	14827

The radar diagram ranks all 32,844 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England according to the indices of deprivation. Each LSOA has a population of circa 1,500 people or 650 households.

- The blue line indicates the England average;
- Within the blue line is more deprived;
- Outside the blue line is less deprived.

The radar diagram above is derived from the English Indices of Deprivation 2019. It ranks each neighbourhood in England in terms of their characteristics in relation to the following indicator sets:

- The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
- The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
- The Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- The Crime Domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.

## THE VISION FOR LEOMINSTER

This vision is the basis of an integrated and forward-looking development strategy which links business, industry and tourism with community, rural life and the countryside to a sustainable and green future. Its gateway position in the Marches is within 90 minutes travel from Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff, with a combined population of over 5 million people.

Our key strategic objectives include making Leominster a place that:

### Shares our heritage and welcomes visitors

- a place with a thriving and diverse tourism economy rooted in its unique heritage and nationally-renowned antiques trade
- a place which welcomes visitors so they stay longer, see and spend more
- a gateway for walking, cycling and holidays based on a range of rural activities
- a place with a wide ranging and exciting independent retail offer
- a place where people can enjoy local artisan food and drink
- a place with a distinctive and high quality built and natural environment that is easy to explore
- a place with inclusive offer suitable for visitors of all ages and abilities
- a centre from which to explore the surrounding area

### Commits to sustainable growth

- a place with excellent digital connectivity to attract and support businesses of all types and sizes
- a place that builds on its strong manufacturing tradition and skills base
- a place that encourages and works with inward investment, innovation and new talent
- a place with a strong forward looking skills development offer and career opportunities for all
- a place which engages with and supports our whole community
- a place that makes full use of its assets and has excellent local infrastructure
- a place that is actively addressing climate and ecological issues to support the present and improve the future
- a place that supports microbusinesses to start and flourish

### Builds on its strategic location on the Welsh border and in the Marches

- an accessible place for all with green transport connection links
- a place which is committed to developing active travel options
- natural first port of call for the surrounding hinterland for goods and services
- a place with good local amenities and an attractive public realm

## THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

A full review has been undertaken of all extant documents produced in the last five years relating to Leominster's economic and community development (see Appendix 1). This contextual analysis has informed the selection and prioritisation of investment proposals in the Town Investment Plan.

The main challenges facing Leominster:

- More deprived on all domains than the England average - particularly low on skills (3rd decile)
- lower proportion of younger people of a working age than the England average
- Modestly smaller stock of jobs than Herefordshire average
- Unemployment modest but has increased in the context of Covid and is higher than the county average
- 240 jobs lost between 2015-18 (4.8% of the total)
- Significantly higher proportion of low value properties than the national average (whilst this is a challenge for commercial property investment, it is noted that in some circumstances it may also be an attractant)
- Weak visitor economy vs UK average
- Lower wages than the UK average
- Public realm/amenities in poor condition

## THE TOWN'S ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

We have set out below the key assets and strengths of the town

- Heritage Buildings, Heritage Action Zone Status and funding
- Visitor economy potential
- Railway station with good connectivity to Hereford and Shrewsbury Cardiff & Manchester
- Second largest urban population in Herefordshire
- Strategic location on crossroads of A49 and A44 with access to Wales and central location in the Marches
- Well performing schools
- Opportunity to make more of Riverside and open spaces
- Antiques trade
- Strong manufacturing centre with skilled manual labour
- Digital connectivity

## SPATIAL CONTEXT

The Herefordshire Core Strategy contains a chapter on place-shaping. For Leominster, this sets out area policies and proposals, including broad (rather than specific) locations where larger scale or strategic development is proposed. Leominster is described as the main centre in the north of the county that fulfils a diverse range of important roles as a centre for residential, employment, cultural, retail, tourism and recreational uses. The vision for Leominster outlined in the strategy centres on 'meeting housing need (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel, facilitating employment generation and diversification, improving delivery and access to services and realising the value of the environment as an economic asset.

Within the profile for Leominster, emphasis is placed on density, design, connectivity (sustainable transport modes), minimising energy use and the heritage and archaeological value of earthworks on land south of Barons Cross. The evidence base underpinning the strategy describes how extensive areas of Leominster are at risk of flooding, (in order to address this active flood protection works are currently underway to the north of the town – a considerable investment by the Environment Agency) particularly to the north of the town, and therefore the effects of any new developments must be mitigated through adequate control measures and additional capacity in water treatment infrastructure and surface water management. The Core Strategy is currently being reviewed. It is expected the new version will focus more on protecting and enhancing biodiversity and natural capital and reducing carbon emissions. Herefordshire Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and has a target to reduce carbon emission to net zero by 2030, which is well within the lifetime of this plan.

A review of the Core Strategy has now been commenced which will update the evidence base particularly in relation to biodiversity and green infrastructure.

In aligning with the Core Strategy, the Leominster Neighbourhood Development Plan refers to:

- The need for new housing development to take account of the risk of significant additional pressure on the existing local community and services while minimising the impact on the environment and reducing running costs; and it must be the right type and tenure of housing in the right place.
- The principles that should cover the location of a new medical centre as well as how a better planned environment could contribute to the health and wellbeing of everyone living and/or working in Leominster.
- The problem of traffic flow through the town and the congestion and air quality issues at Bargates. This was also picked up in the *Bargates air quality action plan* of 2014 which contained a number of actions around traffic light sequencing, improvements to cycle routes, pedestrian routes and public transport, a southern relief road alongside a behavioural change programme and information/awareness raising. The plan supports the construction of a new link road – even if the urban expansion does not go ahead. The plan looks at how to prioritise journeys on foot and cycle by improving facilities for walkers and cyclists. There is currently no clear prospect for the delivery of the new link road so the Plan requires updating to address the fact that the A44 through town poses numerous challenges re air, noise, vibration and enabling pedestrians/cyclists to feel safe.
- Facilitating and promoting sustainable economic growth – from diversifying traditional sectors to the sensitive development of the tourism sector as well as increasing employment opportunities at all levels and ensuring a ready supply of employment land.
- Retaining the green spaces that people value, improve them, enhance their biodiversity and add new green spaces which connect into travel corridors for people and nature. The plan proposes to do this within a Green Infrastructure Framework that sits alongside the other five themes contained in the document. This links to the Herefordshire Green Infrastructure Study of 2010.
- The town's prosperity was historically based on the wool trade and Leominster's central streets and alleys retain their medieval character. The Neighbourhood Development Plan therefore sets out that any new buildings in the town centre should

contribute to the distinctiveness of the settlement rather than having a ‘could be anywhere’ appearance.

The spatial impact of the proposed MTIP projects will, when aligned with Heritage Action Zone initiatives, make Leominster a more attractive place to live, work, invest and visit examples include, the development of a Mobi Hub (transport interchange) at Leominster Station, the phased development of the Dales Site at Marsh Court and the refurbishment and repurposing of Corn Square which are set out in more detail later in this report.

In the north of Herefordshire – affecting Bromyard and Leominster there is currently a planning moratorium linked to phosphate levels in the River Lugg.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

From the outset of its commission, Rose Regeneration has worked to establish a dialogue with as many stakeholders in Leominster’s future as possible, in order to establish a solid evidence base, of demand and need. Engagement with Leominster Town Council, local business community, voluntary sector and other key local stakeholders has played a major role in the development of this Plan.

The process of developing the Plan commenced with a town walk and follow-up meeting involving the Herefordshire Council Cabinet Member, the local Herefordshire Councillors, the Mayor of Leominster, Leominster Town Councillors and local businesses. Leominster Town Council, which played a key role in helping to identify all the key stakeholders in the Town. This was followed up by some 50 individual contacts by email, telephone and video call as well as engagement with the public and voluntary organisations in the Team Leominster grouping.

The next significant engagement event was a town Zoom meeting to which all those identified were invited; this meeting was chaired by a town Councillor and included twenty-six local stakeholders. The meeting identified a number of themes for the Town investment Plan to consider and develop. A number of thematic meetings with key stakeholders were then held to consider the key themes in more detail and identify the vision, strategic objectives and project ideas for inclusion in the Plan.

Following the completion of these meetings, there has been a range of consultations and discussions with potential delivery and funding partners. This has included engagement with private landowners, business owners, a number of Herefordshire Council officers, the Leominster Heritage Action Zone team, the Leominster Cultural consortium and others.

Throughout the process, there has been regular dialogue with representatives of Herefordshire Council.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

Theory of Change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It essentially addresses “market failure”. During the course of our work in Leominster, we have identified three intervention priorities (Business and Economy, Tourism/Visitors, Town/Civic Amenities) from the Leominster Town Vision and have worked back from these to identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place (and how these related to one another causally) for the goals to occur. These are all mapped out in the Outputs and Outcomes framework below.

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Leominster	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Facilitation of Marsh Court the Former Dales site	Business and Economy  Tourism/Visitors  Town/Civic amenities	Low stock of jobs/ Employment opportunities Weak visitor economy  Low Population of younger people of working age  Outdated GP facilities  Income Levels  Poor quality of public realm	Acquire and encourage the development of new employment land  Actively market the town as a great place to bring or start your business	new health facilities new retail space new employment space additional hotel bedrooms new homes for older people	Improved hotel offer to support business activity and tourism  jobs safeguarded and new jobs created Modern Health facilities	Improved Gateway to town from A49  Increased tourism spend in the local economy  Improved Health for local population	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Leominster Railway Station/Mobi Hub	Tourism/Visitors  Town/Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Invest in connectivity between the industrial estates and the town centre and transport hubs	CO2 reduction through reduction in car journeys	Better functioning connections and communications in Leominster	A more sustainable town	Within 10 years carbon emissions to be reduced by 50%
Leominster Fire Station relocation and redevelopment	Town/Civic Amenities	Improved housing offer	A lack of overall social and economic diversity compared to other settlements	Improved and more efficient public services  new homes provided  m2 additional retail floorspace new jobs	Better designed town centre offering additional affordable housing	A wider range of live/work options for those who seeks to participate in the town	Within 15 years a redistributed economic profile providing scope for young people to have an economic stake in the town and older people to live there independently and successfully
Com Square (part of Heritage Action Zone)	Tourism/Visitors  Town/Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Invest in public realm and in alternative car parking provision	An attractive multi-purpose public space for the Town	A better appointed town centre functioning more effectively for visitors	Increased tourism spend in the local economy	Leominster works effectively as a key visitor and living destination based on a town centre which works better and attracts more commercial investment
Shop/building frontage grant scheme (Part of Hereford Action Zone)	Tourism/Visitors  Town /Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Invest in pump priming grants to drive out private sector investment	Improved Built environment in the Town	More footfall and private investment	More demand to visit and invest in the town	Leominster works effectively as a key visitor and living destination based on a town centre which works better and attracts more commercial investment
Old Priory	Tourism/Visitors	Weak visitor economy	Encourage private investment to renovate	A wider range of visitor accommodat	A more integrated and effective tourist	Improved tourism offer and/or town amenities	Visitor numbers and tourism spend

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Leominster	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
			and refurbish existing Hotels and develop new visitor accommodation options. Could include grant from Heritage Action zone and a community Asset Transfer	ion in Leominster	infrastructure		Will rise to regional average within 10 years
Skills Development	Business and Economy	Low skills base	Invest in improved skills facilities for the Town	New job placement and training initiatives	new apprentices people trained	Improved income levels	Skill levels to rise to national average over the next 10 years
Leominster Enterprise Park Extension	Business/Economy	Low stock of jobs/ Employment Opportunities Income Levels	Acquire and encourage the development of new employment land  Actively market the town as a great place to bring or start your business	10 Hectares of new employment land  m2 of new employment space  jobs safeguarded /protected	Long term future of employment needs in the town secured	Improved job opportunities and income levels	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Leominster Incubation Hub	Business/Economy	Low stock of jobs/ Employment Opportunities Income Levels	Acquire and encourage the development of new employment land  Actively market the town as a great place to bring or start your business	m2 of new employment space  jobs safeguarded /protected	Improved survival rates for new business start ups	Improved job opportunities and income levels	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Food and Drink Attraction	Business/Economy  Tourism/Visitors	Improved Food and drink Offer	Identify site for local food sector investment proposals	More local sourcing and selling of food	Increased dynamism of local food and drink sector	More dynamic local economy	Visitor numbers and tourism spend Will rise to regional average within 10 years
Worcester Bromyard Leominster Greenway	Tourism/Visitors  Town/Civic amenities	Weak Visitor Economy	Support development of the new visitor path as part of the wider Herefordshire network	New cycling and walking route	More visitors cycling and walking to the town	Increased visitor spend	Visitor numbers and tourism spend Will rise to regional average within 10 years
Visitor Economy/ accommodation	Tourism/Visitors	Weak Visitor Economy	Encourage private investment to renovate and refurbish existing Hotels and develop new	New and improved hotel and visitor accommodation	Improved Accommodation Offer	Increased visitor spend	Visitor numbers and tourism spend Will rise to regional average within 10 years



Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Leominster	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
			visitor accommodation options.				

## PROJECTS

The following projects emerged through the stakeholder engagement process. These projects ideas were validated through a number of stakeholder meetings and subsequent group and one to one discussions.

The tables prior and below provide a short form summary by way of an overview of projects, those projects that could be considered appropriate for Herefordshire Employment Land and Incubation Space Capital Programme funding and individual descriptions of those projects that are considered strategically significant, with the potential to attract funding outside of the council.

The package of projects identified in this MTIP will need to access a range of funding sources in order to be delivered. Herefordshire Council has earmarked some £20million for Employment Land and Incubation Space development in its capital programme as an investment pot for capital projects in the county’s five market towns.

This funding can be used by the council to invest in projects which can demonstrate an appropriate business case which shows the ability of the projects to generate capital receipts or income which can be used to pay back the initial investment over time. Some of the projects in the Plan may secure funding through this route subject to detailed business cases being developed and considered by the council.

The majority of the projects identified will need to explore alternative funding options which could include: private investment including; Heritage Lottery; charitable trusts; other public sector funding such as the capital programmes of the West Mercia Police Service; the Hereford and Worcester Fire service; the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group; the Marches LEP; Homes England; One Public Estate (OPE) etc.

In addition to these sources of funding there are a range of Government funding opportunities already in place and more will be announced going forward. Some of the projects in the Plan will require revenue funding as well as capital investment. There may be opportunities to package projects together to bid for funding as well as to bid for funds in phases on the larger projects. Different funders will require different information and governance arrangements which will need to be considered on a bid-by-bid basis. The evidence base and supporting information produced to support this Plan will be a useful information and policy context to help inform bids for funding.

In May 2021 the Town Council and wider stakeholders met to consider the relative priority to allocate to each project. A scoring matrix based on the good practice methodology identified by the Town Hub which supports the implementation of the national Town Fund was used to assess the relative merit of each project. Within the matrix there are 8 themes chosen through local stakeholder engagement.

For Leominster the key criteria agreed were: contribution to net zero; attraction of more visitors/inward investment; increased GVA (a measure of the productivity of businesses); increased business diversity (an increase to the range and variety of businesses operating locally); higher skills; better population balance (supporting a wide demographic spread of age



groups); greater equity (supporting fairer access to all determinants of quality of life); and equality agenda (eliminating any form of discrimination). Each project was scored by the group on a scale of 1-5 where one is lowest to provide a group composite score. These scores then used to rank the project as set out in the summary table at Appendix 2.

## Strategically Significant Projects

The individual projects set out in the templates below have been identified as strategically important to the development of Leominster’s economic development. The project summaries provided explain which intervention framework the projects will address, a brief project description, cost, timescales and outputs. There is also an explanation of the potential or identified demand for the projects as well as suggested funding sources and a possible exit strategy for each project to ensure sustainability without the need for ongoing council revenue support. The overall next steps for the projects are summarised after the project templates.

investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Leominster Enterprise Park Extension					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
The adopted Herefordshire Core Strategy confirms that Leominster Enterprise Park will continue to serve the employment needs of Leominster, which will include a further extension of up to 10 hectares to the south of the enterprise park.			<i>Indicative Costs</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
Demand Analysis	There is the opportunity to expand Leominster Enterprise Park will to serve the medium to long-term employment needs of Leominster by bringing forward an extension of up to 10 hectares to the south of the existing enterprise park. A range of employment uses and start up units could be accommodated on the site		£5 million	5 Years	10 hectares
Potential funding sources	Possible support (subject to business case) through the Employment Land and Business Space Council capital programme allocation and private sector				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Capital receipts and potentially rent from the development				

investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Leominster Shop/ building frontage grant scheme				
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	
Investment in the public realm needs to be complemented by investment in the frontages of shops and other town centre buildings to make the town a place to visit and spend time in. A grant scheme is required to encourage property owners to invest in town centre properties.  In Leominster there are already some funds in place through the Heritage Action Zone to fund a scheme of this nature.,		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
Demand Analysis	This will enable the full potential of the HAZ to be achieved through providing additional matched funding and leverage. Clear demand and interest has arisen through the Town Fund consultation.	£75,000	3 Years	20 properties
Potential funding sources	Historic England/ Heritage Action Zone, and private sector			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Private sector investors will take ongoing responsibility for the properties			

investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Leominster Railway Station/ Mobi Hub					
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
<p><i>Description:</i> Leominster Railway Station is managed by Transport for Wales under the revised franchise arrangement that started in October 2018 served by routes running between Hereford, Shrewsbury, Cardiff and Manchester with typically 2-3 trains an hour.</p> <p>The station is the second busiest of the four stations within the county but currently has limited car-parking provision and connections with other forms of transport. The proposal is to acquire land to the West or East of the station to develop as a Mobi Hub which would include rail-based park and ride alongside an offer of different and connected transport modes supplemented with enhanced facilities and information features such as the introduction of an electric bus service linking the railway station and other key locations in the town and surrounding area.</p> <p>There is also the opportunity to improve linkages from the Leominster Enterprise Park to the rest of the town including the railway station by introducing a new active travel link (including a cycle way and footpath) between Southern Avenue and the Enterprise Park. This could be as part of a package of transport measures associated with the Mobi Hub project</p> <p>Such a facility will make Leominster a more attractive place for people to choose to live. It will also make Leominster more attractive as a business location enabling businesses to more readily attract skilled staff from further afield and enabling businesses to connect with customers in other parts of the UK in a more environmentally positive way than driving.</p>			Cost	Timescale	Outputs
Demand Analysis	Past studies were undertaken in 2015 to assess rail parking demand and how the station could accommodate rail-based park and ride. The studies concluded that an increase of 100 spaces was warranted with the potential for these to be on land to the west or east of the station.				
Potential funding sources	Grant funding, such as Leveling UP Fund. There is the potential to charge for car parking adjacent to the railway station which could provide a revenue stream.				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Dependent on how the project developed.				

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Food and Drink Attraction					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description:</i> Leominster is home to a number of food and drink manufacturing businesses which could potentially support the development of the town's visitor economy. Good examples are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The visitor experience centre planned to complement the existing farm cider production premises at Newton Court Farm; and</li> <li>• The Swan Brewery currently located in rented premises on the main industrial estate on the edge of the town. The brewery already runs a number of open days which attract good visitor numbers but their current location does not maximise development potential for them or the town particularly when compared to the popularity and success of the Ludlow Brewery in Shropshire.</li> </ul> <p>The Swan Brewery is ready for the next stage in its development but requires a new site of approximately one third of an acre in which to expand its retail and visitor offer including a brewery tap. Ideally this site should be located within a five-minute walk of the railway station and as close to the town centre as possible. This would provide a significant new tourist destination for the town which would complement and improve the tourism offer. The train journey and a visit to the town linked to a brewery visit being an offer that will bring more visitors to the town as a whole.</p> <p>It is recommended that Herefordshire Council and Leominster Town Council work with the brewery and other interested parties to find a suitable site/building which could support this new attraction and potentially other associated businesses.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	
		To be borne by private sector	Within 5 years	Visitor numbers and spend	Jobs
		Demand Analysis	Based on business planning of individual businesses		
		Potential funding sources	Private Sector		
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Private sector to operate				

Investment Proposal Form							
Project Name: Leominster Fire Station Relocation and Redevelopment							
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>				
<p><i>Description</i> There is an opportunity to relocate the Fire Station from its current location in Broad Street and collocate it with the West Mercia Police Station on the Enterprise Park. This will also allow the existing site to be redeveloped as a mixed retail/housing scheme. It should also improve operational efficiency, make revenue savings and deliver an improved service to the public. Herefordshire council could acquire the existing site for redevelopment linked to their existing land at the Broad street Car park.</p> <p>Making a public feature of the riverside location would make real contribution to attractiveness of arrival in Leominster for visitors using the main car park. A green and blue space would also be a boon for the many locals who regularly walk this route into town along the highly polluted and noisy A44.</p>			<i>Indicative Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>		
			£2million	5 years	Houses New commercial floorspace		
			<i>Demand Analysis</i>	A feasibility study has just been completed by consultants Jacobs for Herefordshire Council			
			<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, One Public Estate			
			<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	To be operated by Police and Fire services			

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Leominster Incubation Hub					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description:</i> There is an opportunity to create an incubation hub to support co-working and start-up businesses in the town. Potential locations could include the former Barclays bank building, the Old Priory, or the Marsh Court site. The Barclays Bank building is currently in private ownership and is in a central location but could be converted to premises to support the start-up of local service businesses that need low-cost office space/ hot desks, shared meeting rooms and other support. The Marsh court site offers the opportunity for new build space which could serve manufacturing and other start-up businesses.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	
		£100,000-£500,000 Depending on final location	One to five years	New jobs  New businesses created	
		Demand Analysis	Core Strategy and Neighbourhood Plan		
		Potential funding sources	Private Sector, Marches LEP, Herefordshire Council,		
		Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	To be self-financed from rent generated by occupiers		

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Corn Square Regeneration					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description:</i> Corn Square is the most prominent built public space in the town serving as the town's market square and as a key hub/ focus for the Town centre including the Tourist Information centre and Town Council offices. The square also provides an important number of short-term car parking spaces in a central location which allows people to quickly and conveniently pop into town and quickly visit the shops and other services.</p> <p>The space is in need of investment to improve visitor experience of the town. The Square is designated for an investment of £750k as part of Leominster's Heritage Action Zone programme. The Leominster Cultural Consortium has identified the Square as one of a number key locations with potential to support the Town's cultural offer. A consultation is planned to confirm the nature and timing of this cultural offer which could include chargeable events like open air theatre, music and cinema and a range of themed markets and other activities. Once the planned consultation has been undertaken it should be used to inform the future role of Corn Square as a mixed short term car park and events space.</p> <p>More funding may be required to supplement the Heritage Action zone scheme.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	
		£750k	2 years	Increased tourism and visitor spend	
		Demand Analysis	Heritage Action Zone Evidence base		
		Potential funding sources	Heritage Action Zone, Herefordshire Council (Heritage Action Zone match funding)		
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Herefordshire Council's Highways maintenance Programme				

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Marsh Court (Former Dales Site)					
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
Description	Cost	Timescale	Outputs		
<p>Economically transformative development in a key Leominster gateway.</p> <p>The phased development of the Dales Site at Marsh Court would open a key gateway to the town as a multi-purpose facility, potentially including a much-needed GP medical hub, light industrial units, senior living accommodation, a budget hotel and artisan food and drink retail - all of it breathing life into the town itself and driving its economy. This 15-acre site is currently available for redevelopment as the current occupiers continue their relocation to another site on the Enterprise Park. The site is in a key gateway position at the north eastern entrance to the Town. The current owners are considering a mixed-use development on the site which could include a new GP surgery/Health Hub with Pharmacy, Later living focused housing, sustainable housing, Accommodation provision, a business and commercial quarter, Family friendly amenity area, retail and tourism platform, micro grid green energy provision on the adjacent 3.5-acre site. New and improved existing links with the town center and local area.</p> <p>The Marsh Court site is owned in its entirety by Frank H Dale Ltd who have been prominent business owners, operators and employers in Leominster for several generations. The main business currently is a national engineering company. In 2014, the business began a £10 million investment, expansion and relocation programme to a new purpose made facility on Owen Way, having been limited by layout and access in their operation at Marsh Court. The next stage of this programme will release the 15-acre Mill Street (Marsh Court) site for redevelopment that could significantly enhance the A44/A49 Gateway into Leominster, a strategic and busy transport route to the Welsh Marches. This gives it the potential to incorporate a North Hereford "Tourism Platform" with its mixed retail- easy accessibility would enable both the capture of new and passing visitors who can then be signposted and clearly linked to the town centre and local attractions. The vision is to bring a vibrant, accessible and sustainability feel to the town's main entrance.</p> <p>£30-40 million of investment is required over a 1–10-year period.</p> <p>There is a potential funding gap requiring public intervention to bring the site forward for development. There is also the opportunity of public investment in the employment land/business units aspects of the project.</p>	<p>MTIP: £4million for employment land/business units</p> <p>Private/ Public sector: £35 million</p>	2022-2032	<p>Jobs</p> <p>New business start ups</p> <p>Support existing businesses</p>		
Demand Analysis	Further analysis required to established feasibility of multi-use site				
Potential funding sources	Public and private sector investment and loan finance				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Dependent on object of funding (i.e. Sustainable Construction Training Facility)				



Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Worcester Bromyard Leominster Greenway				
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	
<p><i>Description:</i> The Worcester Bromyard Leominster Greenway project (<a href="http://wblgreenway.org.uk">wblgreenway.org.uk</a>) is a key potential development in the context of developing Leominster's tourism offer. It aims to create a 16 km walking, cycling and horse-riding track along, or as near as possible to, the course of the Leominster section of the original Worcester Bromyard Leominster railway.</p> <p>The Leominster section of the Greenway's development envisages three phases:</p> <p>Phase 1: creation of a multi-user track for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with limited mobility from Leominster Town Centre to Steens Bridge via Stoke Prior (6km). Precise route to be determined but should directly benefit town centre businesses with increased footfall and could link to proposed Leominster Green Infrastructure Corridor<sup>3</sup>. Providing gateway to WBL Greenway, and other trails thereby creating sustainable communities through tourism and reducing isolation<sup>4</sup></p> <p>Phase 2: creation of a similar multi-user track from Steens Bridge to Fencote (6km) creating sustainable communities through tourism and reducing isolation<sup>4</sup></p> <p>Phase 3: creation of a similar multi-user track from Fencote to Rowden (4km)</p> <p>Work on the Worcester to Bromyard Section will be underway in a phased approach at the same time with the final phase to link the towns together.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
		<p>Projected costs for the Leominster section of the WBL Greenway are approximately £2.5 million (based on Sustrans estimates of £150k per km),</p>	2021-28	<p>Additional annual spend in town based on 16 km trail = £586k</p> <p>1.6 jobs (direct, indirect and induced) are supported or sustained for every km of route constructed.</p> <p>Bike hire and cycle / walking supplies shop</p>
Demand Analysis	Part of next stage feasibility			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Feasibility into longer term business case required			

investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Old Priory Sale/Asset Transfer					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<i>Description</i> Leominster's Old Priory is part of a Benedictine monastic complex that dates back to 1123. It is currently owned by Herefordshire Council who, due to annual running costs of nearly £70,000 (on top of a maintenance backlog of £380,000 (excluding work to the roof), have expressed a willingness in the past to transfer asset ownership but have now indicated an intention to market the property for sale. The footprint of the building comprises 3,090 square metres and the building itself is insured for a sum of £2.09 million. It currently has tenants, including the Youth Hostel Association, Herefordshire ECHO, Leominster Meeting Centre and Leominster Food Bank. Its central location in the medieval heart of Leominster and protected position on the south bank of the river Lugg have been the subject of debate with the Leominster town's steering group and the Heritage Action Zone project is considering a number of repurposed uses including: relocation of Leominster museum, destination boutique hotel, cookery school, extended community asset.	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>		
	£2million	2021+	New jobs Increased tourism visitors and spend Heritage building protected		
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Herefordshire is keen to find a solution due to historic and ongoing running costs. Leominster Town Council is currently considering an asset transfer.				
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Central government grant funding, Marches LEP.				
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	Asset transfer to Town Council or Sale to private sector				

Investment Proposal Form			
Project Name: Visitor Economy			
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>
<p><i>Description</i> Herefordshire's visitor economy has suffered from a lack of investment and marketing for many years and Leominster has been no exception. The new town vision identifies the development of tourism as a key strategic objective. The potential launch of the Herefordshire DBID in January 2022 should theoretically address the marketing issue and the repurposing of Corn Square led by the LHAZ would significantly enhance the town's appeal as a visitor attraction. Leominster could also benefit from a county-wide strategy to integrate festivals and events while the development of the Leominster leg of the WBL Greenway would directly address the aspiration to position the town as a gateway for walking and cycling holidays and other rural activities.</p> <p>The main Visitor Economy challenge for the town is a lack of functional quality accommodation. Within a five-mile radius, there are 2 hotels (Royal Oak and Talbot – both of which require significant investment), 1 Youth Hostel, 2 Guest Houses, 9 camp-sites and 63 self-catering cottages. Rose recommends strongly that stakeholders support their refurbishment and any new accommodation initiatives (e.g. development of a budget business hotel at Marsh Court) through the planning process.</p>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
	£2million (development of accommodation and general tourism offer)	2021+	jobs
			new business creation
			inward investment
			Support of existing businesses
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Significant and well-tested demand for strategic support for Leominster's visitor economy		
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Central government grant funding. Marches LEP, private sector		
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	Destination Management Partnership		

Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Skills Development				
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	
<p><i>Description</i> Stakeholders in Leominster's future <i>and national data</i> have identified the town's skills gap as a key challenge to its ongoing economic viability. As part of its community engagement, Rose convened a Skills working group at which the scale of the problem was identified and potential solutions were discussed. It was agreed that hands-on business engagement was critical and the Head of Earl Mortimer School and Sixth Form Centre expressed a desire and willingness to engage with the Hereford Skills Foundry project as soon as there was clarity on its funding award from the Towns Fund.</p> <p>A number of locations are possible for either the Skills Foundry or other training facilities such as a sustainable construction facility which could include the redeveloped the Dales site at Marsh Court or the Leominster Enterprise Park. It will be important to ensure that employers in the town are linked to training providers such as the Herefordshire Group Training Association, the Herefordshire and Ludlow College as well as sector specific training opportunities such as Wolverhampton Universities new Health and social Care training facility in Telford. Initiatives such as a business placement passport to encourage young people in the town to build links with local employers are also important. Skills issues can also be addressed through providing the right kind of space, networking opportunities and support for smaller scale commercial research projects and business/FEI/HEI links to engage with real world technical and business solutions.</p>	<i>Indicative Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	
	£100,000 (rollout of Skills Foundry facilities)	2021	Upskilling of local workforce	
			Support for existing and new businesses	
			More compelling inward investment proposition	
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	The development of Leominster's economy is constrained by its skills base. Stakeholder meetings with business leaders have confirmed the urgent need for action asap.			
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Central Government. Maarches LEP. Private sector business community.			
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	To be taken forward by a local training provider			

## Next Steps

This is one of five Market Town Economic Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council for each of Herefordshire's market towns.

Herefordshire Council has identified projects that could be considered (subject to business case) for support through their Employment Land and Incubation Space capital programme allocation. As a result in addition to this Market Town Investment Plan, Rose Regeneration has completed Outline Business Cases (OBCs) and Project Mandates for the following projects for the council's consideration.

An OBC has been developed and submitted for: the Marsh Court Project

Project Mandates have been developed and submitted for: the Leominster Incubation Hub and Enterprise park projects

Once the Plans, OBCs and Project Mandates have been considered by Herefordshire Council it is recommended that the council works with the five market town councils to establish an appropriate delivery mechanism to oversee, secure funding for and monitor the delivery of the Market Town Economic Investment Plans. This delivery mechanism should be led and supported by Herefordshire Council and should involve representatives from each Town Council.

Herefordshire Council: <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/vision>

Marches LEP: <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk>

# APPENDIX 1 STRATEGIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

This table summarises an analysis of all extant policies affecting Leominster at a national, regional, county and Leominster-specific level developed over the last five years.

National context	Regional Context	Herefordshire Context	Leominster Context
<p><i>Industrial Strategy</i> – ‘places’ foundation: tackling entrenched regional disparities.</p> <p><i>Industrial Strategy Productivity Evidence Review</i> – some cities and rural county areas have been falling behind, including Herefordshire. County Councils Network analysis of GVA in 36 county areas found Herefordshire to be experiencing the smallest economic growth 5.3% between 2014 and 2018).</p> <p>A low carbon future in a changing climate – UK obligations under the 2015 Paris Agreement - setting a net zero target for carbon emissions by 2050.</p> <p><i>HM Treasury/Government</i> department resources - levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people.</p> <p>Build Better, Build Greener, Build Faster - reforming the planning system (<i>NPPF, Planning for the Future White Paper</i>) to give more emphasis to quality, design and the environment.</p> <p>COVID-19 recovery measures - protecting and restoring livelihoods, improving living standards and new economic opportunities.</p>	<p><i>Local Industrial Strategy</i> and <i>Strategic Economic Plan</i> – inclusive growth, connectivity, skills, enterprise and innovation, trade and investment. Herefordshire’s sectoral specialisms: food and drink, education, advanced manufacturing and engineering, defence and construction.</p> <p>Growth opportunities for (i) manufacturing and engineering, (ii) food supply chain/agri-tech innovation, and (iii) cyber security and resilience.</p> <p><i>Skills Plan</i> and <i>Skills Sectors Deep Dives</i> – the provision of Higher Education provision and Further Education courses relevant to these growth opportunities in Herefordshire.</p> <p>Cyber Resilience Alliance / <i>Science and Innovation Audit</i> – the largest cluster of cyber security activity outside of London: growth in direct jobs, wider investment in products and processes and acting as a regional testbed.</p> <p><i>Growth Hub and Enterprise Zone</i> with specialisms in defence and security at Skylon Park, Hereford.</p> <p><i>Economic recovery plan</i> – investment in infrastructure and jobs: Hereford city streetscape improvements and NMITE Skylon campus development.</p>	<p>Herefordshire is a cold spot for social mobility – it is in the bottom 20 list of Local Authorities in England in terms of the chances that disadvantaged children will do well at school and get a good job.</p> <p>The importance of creating high-quality, highly skilled jobs against a backdrop of traditional low-skill, low-wage economy. NMITE</p> <p><i>County Plan</i> – improving sustainability, connectivity, wellbeing and becoming carbon neutral by 2030-2031: Talk Community (hubs), community wealth building (increasing the amount of money that stays in the local economy); and Sustainable Food County (a whole system approach to tackling obesity, diet related ill health, food poverty, waste and climate change).</p> <p><i>Hereford Town Investment Plan</i> – intended to deliver urban regeneration, a stronger skills base, and improved connectivity in the city. Under the strapline ‘green and fair’ the TIP recognises Hereford’s connectivity to market towns and countryside (e.g. tourism – attract and disperse approach). Telling stories about place, identifying and implementing a vision, strong partnership working and securing funding/investment are all needed for pandemic Recovery and Transformation.</p> <p>Skylon Park – Enterprise Zone for defence and security, advanced manufacturing, food and drink processing and sustainable technologies. Local Development Order to simplify planning arrangements. Weaving old industrial landscape with future proofing to allow for growth and change. Intended to act as a <i>catalyst for economic growth</i> across Herefordshire.</p> <p><i>Hereford Transport Strategy</i> describes tragic flows, delays and congestion schemes which increase physical activity (e.g. cycling, walking) generate high value-for-money.</p>	<p>Leominster is a principal market town and while it fulfils residential, employment, cultural, retail, tourism and recreational needs for its local community and a wider catchment, it has defined geographical boundaries to deliver place-based transformative change.</p> <p><i>Herefordshire Economic Vision</i> – enabling market towns to maximise their role in building thriving and distinctive service centres.</p> <p><i>Herefordshire Core Strategy</i> – Leominster supporting housing need (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel, employment generation/diversification, improving access to services, and viewing the environment as an economic asset.</p> <p><i>Leominster in 2031 will be one of the country’s more sustainable towns, vibrant and bustling with a prosperous, unpolluted and healthy environment’</i> – this vision, set out in <i>Leominster Neighbourhood Plan</i> attaches sustainable development criteria to areas of the Core Strategy, ensuring proposals that come forward contribute to a healthier community and protect and enhance the character of the town and surrounding area.</p> <p>The <i>Local Transport Plan 2016-2031</i> – there is a need to carry out a transport study to review the requirements set out in the Core Strategy and Neighbourhood Plan. The need for a station review at Leominster and to develop rail access improvements.</p>

## APPENDIX 2 – PROJECT PRIORITISATION

PROJECTS	Theme	DESCRIPTION	Indicative Costs (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
Skills Development - Ledbury, Leominster and Bromyard	Skills Investment	To support the town's viability as a thriving balanced economy, the town needs to develop integrated and forward-looking skills development capacity to support its residents and to attract inward investment. The Skills Foundry project, developed as a collaboration between NMITE, HCA and Rural Media as part of Hereford's Stronger Towns Funding bid, aims to include Herefordshire's market towns in a hub and spoke delivery model and will actively engage with Leominster.	£500	3	3	4	4	5	4	5	5	82.5%
Corn Square Regeneration - Leominster	Public Realm	Corn Square is one of the main focal points in the Town Centre. The space is in need of investment to improve visitor experience and cultural offer of the town.	£2,000	4.5	5	5	4	2	4	4	4	81.25%
Marsh Court - Leominster	Employment Space/Housing	This 18-acre site is currently available for redevelopment as the current occupiers relocate to another site in the Town. The site is in a key gateway position at the northern entrance to the Town. The current owners are promoting a mixed-use development on the site which could include a new GP surgery, housing for older generations, a low-cost chain hotel, business units and commercial retail with a green energy provision on the adjacent site.	£4,000	2	3	5	5	5	4	4	3	77.5%
Leominster Enterprise Park Extension	Employment Space	There is the opportunity to expand Leominster Enterprise Park will to serve the medium to long term employment needs of Leominster by bringing forward an extension of up to 10 hectares to the south of the existing enterprise park. A range of employment uses and start up units could be accommodated on the site	£5,000	2	4	5	5	3	4	4	2	72.5%
Leominster Railway Station/ Mobi Hub	Public Realm/Transport	The core concept of the delivery of a Mobi Hub at Leominster Station will require the acquisition of land to establish a rail based 'park and ride' facility, in addition to the introduction of an electric bus service linking the railway station and other key locations in the town and surrounding area.	£3,000	4	4	3	4	2	4	4	3	70%
Tourism Accommodation Offer - Leominster	Tourism	Tourism Accommodation Offer There is a shortage of overnight accommodation to serve the Town both business visitors and tourists are not currently catered for. There is a need to identify sites for a high-quality boutique hotel, a national chain hotel such as Travelodge or Premier Inn, a campsite close to the town and more self-catering options. The refurbishment of the Royal Oak or Talbot Hotels could be options as well as the redevelopment of the Old Priory site. Project description.	£2,000	2	5	4	4	3	3	3	2	65%
Leominster Incubation Hub	Employment Space	There is an opportunity to create an incubation hub to support start-up businesses in the Town. Potential locations could include the former Barclays bank building or the Marsh Court site. The Barclays Bank building is currently in private ownership and is in a central location but could be converted to premises to support the start up of local service businesses that need low cost office space/ hot desks, shared meeting rooms and other support.	£250	1	2	5	5	3	4	3	3	65%
Old Priory - Leominster	Commercial Development	The proposal is to re-purpose Leominster's Old Priory part of a Benedictine monastic complex that dates back to 1123. A number of alternative uses are possible and could include the relocation of Leominster museum, a destination boutique hotel and cooking school or use as an extended community hub.	£2,000	2	5	3	4	3	2	4	2	62.5%
Leominster Fire Station relocation and redevelopment	Housing	There is an opportunity to relocate the Fire Station from its current location in Broad Street and collocate it with the West Mercia Police Station on the Enterprise Park. This will also allow the existing site to be redeveloped as a mixed retail/housing scheme.	£2,000	2	2	3	3	3	4	3	5	62.5%

Worcester, Bromyard, Leominster Greenway	Green Infrastructure	This project looks at linking Worcester, Bromyard, Leominster and possibly Kington by long distance footpath/cycle way and horse-riding track along, or as near as possible to, the course of the original Worcester Bromyard Leominster railway.	£1,000	4	5	4	4	2	2	2	4	52.5%
Shop/Building Frontage Scheme - Leominster	Commercial Development	A public sector grant scheme is proposed to encourage investment in the frontages of shops and other town centre buildings to make the town a place to visit and spend time in. Elsewhere in the country grant schemes have been successfully used to encourage property owners to invest in town centre properties.	£75	2	5	5	4	2	3	2	2	52.5%
Food and Drink Attraction	Commercial Development	Creation of a brewery and visitor centre	£1,000	0	5	4	3	2	3	2	2	52.5%



## APPENDIX 3 - KEY EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

The table below shows how key employment sectors (including change over time) across all 5 market towns in Hereford align:

### Business: Location Quotient & Job Change

2011 super output area - lower layer	A. Agriculture	B. Mining and quarrying	C. Manufacturing	D. Electricity, gas, water supply	E. Construction	G. Wholesale and retail	H. Transportation and storage	I. Accommodation and food service activities	J. Information and communication	K. Financial and insurance	L. Real estate activities	M. Professional, scientific and technical	N. Administrative and support service	O. Public administration and defence	P. Education	Q. Human health and social work	R. Arts, entertainment and recreation	S. Other service	Total	
<b>Leominster</b>																				
Total	0	0	670	0	20	520	1,345	105	185	35	50	35	315	150	60	280	970	160	115	5,015
Change 15-18	0	0	230	0	0	-120	-325	25	-15	5	-50	-65	115	-45	-15	-35	50	35	-30	-240
LQ	0	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.6	2.2	1.7	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.6	1.5	1.3	1.1	1.0
<b>Bromyard</b>																				
Total	20	0	825	0	0	180	385	10	190	40	10	20	185	85	10	215	520	25	90	2,810
Change 15-18	-20	0	195	0	0	20	75	-50	60	-10	-20	-40	40	-30	0	25	-90	-10	-15	130
LQ	1.2	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.9	1.5	0.4	1.6	1.0
<b>Kington</b>																				
Total	30	0	85	0	0	60	150	35	60	15	0	25	65	80	5	50	200	10	10	880
Change 15-18	0	0	-90	0	0	5	-50	-20	-20	5	0	-5	0	10	0	-50	-50	-10	-5	-280
LQ	5.6	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.1	0.8	0.9	0.4	0.0	1.6	0.8	1.0	0.1	0.6	1.8	0.5	0.6	1.0
<b>Ledbury</b>																				
Total	0	0	665	0	10	55	905	250	315	35	15	45	360	70	50	270	420	180	45	3,690
Change 15-18	-20	0	-335	0	-25	-10	-215	-35	-20	-5	-15	5	-15	-70	-5	100	60	-20	0	-625
LQ	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.4	0.3	1.6	1.4	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.7	1.1	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.9	2.0	0.6	1.0
<b>Ross on Wye</b>																				
Total	0	0	595	0	30	110	1,190	120	480	130	60	160	320	385	30	400	395	100	375	5,080
LQ	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.9	0.5	1.5	0.5	1.3	0.6	0.3	1.8	0.7	0.8	0.1	0.9	0.9	0.8	3.7	1.0
Change 15-18	0	0	25	0	-10	40	15	-10	15	35	-25	15	80	-165	-10	90	-85	-35	-40	-65



# Ross on Wye Investment Plan 2021



*“The continuing relaxed and gentle attractiveness of Ross in its gateway setting and its unique status as the only Town in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has fuelled its growth as a retirement and commuting centre. Against that background the challenge is to ensure that Ross will continue to be a favourite tourist destination but also enable development to ensure that our locally born young people have access to affordable housing, employment for a wide range of skills and a high quality of life within the town”.*

Cllr Jane Roberts Mayor, Ross-on-Wye 2019-20

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Background	6
Context	9
The Vision for Ross-On-Wye	9
The Main Challenges Facing the Town	10
The Town's Assets and Strengths	14
Spatial Context	15
Stakeholder Engagement	16
Theory of Change	17
Projects	20
Appendix 1 – Strategic Context Summary	37
Appendix 2 – Project Prioritisation	39

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Market Town Investment Plans

This Ross-on-Wye Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Ross, play a critical role in the county's economy, as focal points for: employment; retail; tourism, leisure and culture; business investment and growth; housing; and access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The market town investment plans identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development of a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

## The Vision for Ross-on-Wye

"Our objective is to make Ross-on-Wye an excellent place to live and work, a great destination for visits and holidays, and a place where businesses and social enterprises can start, grow, innovate and thrive."

## The Main Challenges facing the town

Ross-on-Wye is the second largest market town in Herefordshire with a population of just over 10,000. According to the English Indices of Deprivation 2019 Ross is less deprived than England on all measures. However, it has 8% more over 65s than the national average and fewer jobs per head than the Herefordshire average.

Between 2015 and 2018 Ross-on-Wye saw a small reduction of 65 jobs (1.3% of the total). And more recently during the early part of the pandemic, between April and September 2020, experienced an increase in benefit claimants from 300 to 350 (17%).

## The Town's Assets and Strengths

Ross-on-Wye is well connected. It is located on the A40 which runs through Gloucester to Abergavenny and beyond. The town also has good road links to Birmingham and the Midlands via the M50 motorway (the 'Ross-on-Wye spur' from the M5) and to South Wales via the A40/A449 dual carriageway.

Ross-on-Wye is located within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is next to the River Wye. Its picturesque buildings include the Market House and The Prospect.

Ross Development Trust RDT was incorporated in 2019 to support local residents in a number of ways. This formal community charitable structure provide the basis for the RDT to undertake delivery activities as an accountable body potentially including some of the projects listed in this Investment Plan.

A new Community Housing Trust has been set up with a view to establishing a Community Land Trust for asset transfer of land for housing that would be designated for local residents.

## Issues in Ross-on-Wye

Issues in Ross-on-Wye	Targets
Demand for sustainable employment land and housing	5 years – Ross reaches the county average level of jobs per head 10-15 years – Ross achieves a parity between economically active people and local jobs
Scope for new sustainable mixed use development	30 years – Ross is a sustainable settlement with reduced net outflow of commuters and an enhanced functionality as the core employment base for the south of the county.
Scope for enhanced visitor economy	5 years new tourism infrastructure in place.
Dilapidated leisure infrastructure meriting enhancement	10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year
Greater realisation of the potential of river Wye as a visitor asset in Ross-on-Wye	30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County
Enhanced community facilities	5 years enhanced townscape increases the civic appeal of the town and its visitor numbers
Tired Public Realm	
Weak visitor economy	10-15 years a pattern of private sector investment in the urban fabric of Ross on Wye emerges 30 years Ross on Wye has a well established sustainable mix of people and visitors supported by a dynamic civic core of amenities

## Project summary

The MTIP identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town's vision. These include:

Development of **employment** opportunities:

- Mixed use development on Model Farm
- Broadmeadow and Tanyard Lane Development

Improvements to support the visitor economy:

- Brampton and Sellack Cycleway
- Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons
- Museum Without Walls
- Civic amenities and projects aimed at young people
- Enhanced sports centre and skate park
- Market House and Apron Plaza and High Street pedestrianisation
- Community facilities at the Ryefield Centre
- Shop/building frontage grant scheme

The MTIP shows how each of these projects contribute to the delivery of Ross-on-Wye's Vision. It will provide a platform for successful funding bids as suitable funding opportunities become available.

Herefordshire Council will continue to work with Ross-on-Wye Town Council and other local stakeholders to identify new project and funding opportunities, carry out feasibility and foundation work, and support local organisations to apply for funding.

## BACKGROUND

This Ross-on-Wye Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire’s market towns, including Ross, play a critical role in the county’s economy, as focal points for: employment; retail, tourism, leisure and culture; business investment and growth; housing; and access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

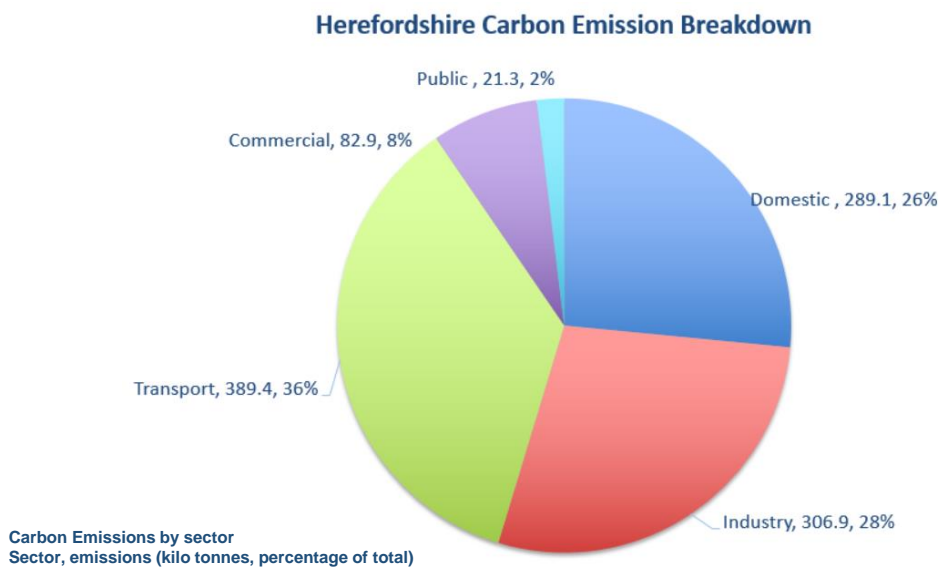
The market town investment plans identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development of a new long term county wide ‘big plan’. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

### Climate and Ecological Emergency

On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council. This declaration was subsequently updated and strengthened on 11 December 2020 when Herefordshire Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) following support for a climate and ecological emergency resolution at full council.

Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

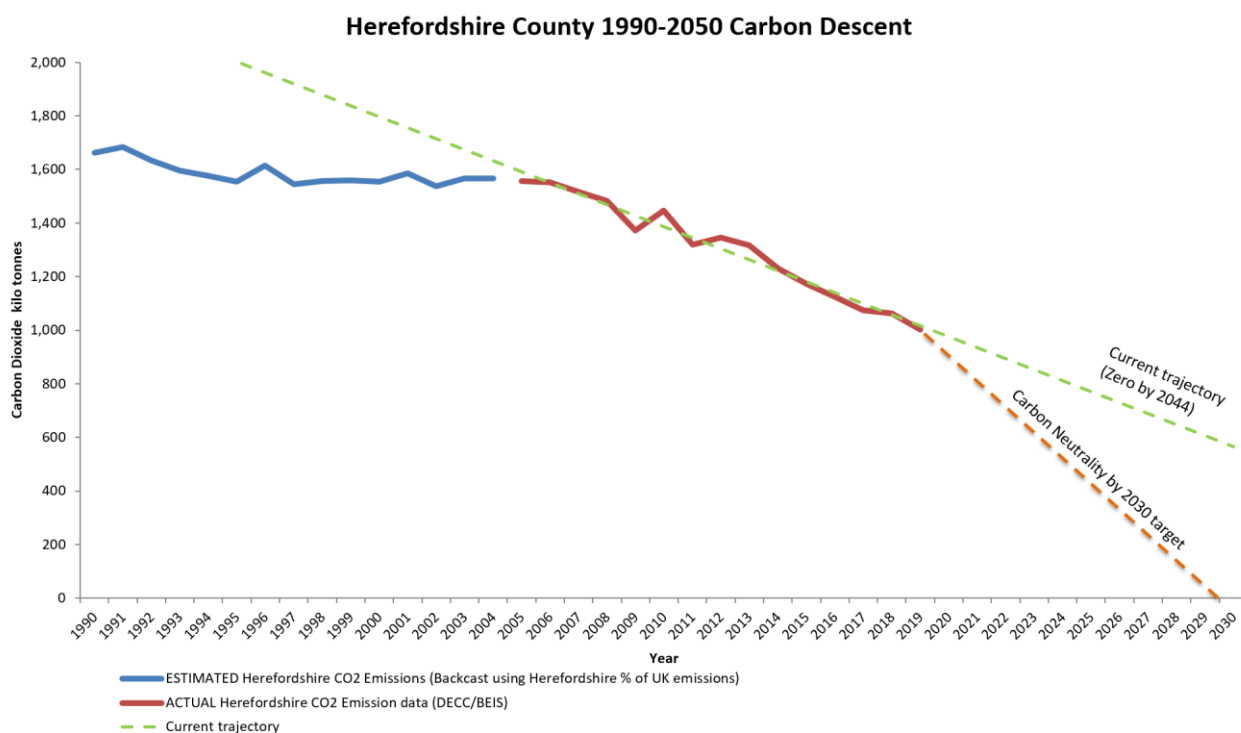
The below chart illustrates Herefordshire’s current carbon emission split and the areas of focus for the Ross-on-Wye MTIP to support the Herefordshire’s journey to net zero.





In order to achieve this target, as illustrated below, a new Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership and Board have been established to catalyse and coordinate new action across the County. These actions have been grouped into a series of six different action plans including: Housing & Buildings; Transport; Energy; Farming & Land Use; Waste and Food.

The details of the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership, including the six themed action plans are set out: <https://zerocarbon.herefordshire.gov.uk/>



As a key strategic plan the Ross-on-Wye MTIP is strongly committed to delivering Herefordshire’s net zero and nature rich commitment and will work in partnership with its communities, businesses and the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Board to achieve this through the development and delivery of the plan.

### Community Including the Impact of Covid-19

The damage to the economy and to health from Covid-19 has been felt across Herefordshire. During 2020 and the early part of 2021, the pandemic reached all corners of the county and has had an impact on every community. During 2020, the UK economy contracted by 9.9% (office of National Statistics<sup>1</sup>). It remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be, but within many sectors we are likely to see a shift to working, learning and engaging in commerce remotely on digital platforms.

The projects proposed in this Plan have been developed through engagement with key stakeholders in Ross-on-Wye and will help the town to attract essential investment as the need to promote recovery opens up new funding opportunities.

Attitudes towards working from home have changed substantially since the start of the COVID pandemic and many workers will continue to work from home long after it has ended.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/articles/coronavirusandtheimpactonoutputintheuconomy/december2020>

There could be positive implications for Herefordshire's market towns in what is being termed 'hybrid working'. The Centre for Towns recently reported that its research indicates "big potential for places to market themselves as online working destinations" as predictions indicate that the longer people are required to work at home, the greater the adoption of home working will be beyond the current situation.

The best performing towns are ones with a healthy mix of age groups and professional types. An increase in home working would have a significant positive impact in rebalancing Herefordshire's market towns demographics and towns should therefore actively promote themselves to attract in and retain a thriving working age population.

Towns will need to work closely with Herefordshire Council to ensure that digital connectivity is adequate to support the needs of home workers. Clearly Herefordshire market towns have a significant 'quality of life' offer, with a good range of local services.

## Economy

Herefordshire faces a number long term economic challenges such as the lowest level of productivity of any county in England<sup>2</sup>, a low wage economy (19% below the national average<sup>3</sup>), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%<sup>4</sup>), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits<sup>5</sup>).

However, the county has a significant number of opportunities, including local strengths in food and drink, tourism, and agriculture, specialisms in fast growing global markets like cyber security, an outstanding quality of life, and new university (New Model Institute in Technology and Engineering). The county is also very well placed to benefit from a post Covid lifestyle trend, as people now look to increasingly work remotely away from populated cities to locations offering a better quality of life.

The market towns have a crucial role to play in addressing the long term economic challenges, and realising the county's many opportunities. They are key local centres for housing, culture, access to public services, tourism, with strong local communities and identities. Establishing great vibrant places to live and meaningful employment opportunities will be key to rebalancing the aging population by retaining/ attracting younger generations to study, live and work in the county for generations to come.

Ross-on-Wye is particularly well placed to realise some of these opportunities, significantly contributing the future economic success of the county as a whole. It is a highly attractive and popular market town, strategically well placed on the road network (A40/ M50), offering a great place to live, visit and work.

As people's approach to work and quality of life requirements change, Ross-on-Wye is well placed to benefit from an increasing transition to a digital economy, with people working from home or in flexible workspaces in attractive, less densely populated locations away from city centres.

The Plan identifies a vision for growth and a programme of investment projects required to deliver the vision and support the economic development of Ross-on-Wye over the next fifteen years. Funding from many different sources will be needed to achieve them. The Plan identifies the timetable for delivery, lead body and potential sources of investment for each of the projects.

---

<sup>2</sup> [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)

## CONTEXT

Ross-on-Wye is identified as one of 23 'opportunity towns' in the Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan. These towns have real potential to deliver stronger economic growth through investments in a range of activities to address the market failures common across the Marches region.

The Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) provides the context of the functioning economic geography of the Marches area and identifies common barriers and opportunities for localities, and their wider local regional and national partnerships, to play a role in improving economic performance.

All 5 towns and Hereford work as an economic system as shown by transport origin and destination data: 20,000 of the 29,000 people who work and live in Herefordshire in the context of these settlements work in Hereford<sup>6</sup>. The economic development of these towns as a group is the best way of underpinning the overall economic development of the county.

The income measure within the Indices of Deprivation 2019 measures the proportion of the population in a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) that live in income deprivation [this includes people who are out-of-work and people who are in-work but have low earnings]. There are 10 LSOAs in Herefordshire that are amongst the 25% most deprived nationally in this domain – 1 of these is located in Ross-on-Wye.

### Ross Town Investment Plan – relationship to the Neighbourhood Development Plan

“The Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan sets out to enhance existing planning guidance by making use of local knowledge, and the views of the people who live here, to shape the future of the town.

This Plan seeks to put Ross itself into the driving seat of its own destiny over the next 12 years, to the maximum extent that this is possible”.

These words from the Foreword of the Ross NDP set a clear context within which the people of Ross will appraise developments and projects that will shape the future of their town. There is therefore a close read across between the Ross-on-Wye NDP and the Town Investment Plan.

The Ross MTIP is not a policy document. The purpose of the MTIP is to identify, assess and consider the deliverability of projects and activities that, with the necessary support and relevant funding, can deliver the policy and strategy objectives in both the Ross-on-Wye NDP and wider local regional and national economic policy context.

## THE VISION FOR ROSS-ON-WYE

Our vision is to work together as a community to maintain, sustain and improve the quality of life in our historic market town so that Ross-on-Wye remains a vibrant and inclusive place for residents, businesses and visitors.

### Objectives

Our objective is to make Ross-on-Wye an excellent place to live and work, a great destination for visits and holidays, and a place where businesses and social enterprises can start, grow, innovate and thrive.

---

<sup>6</sup> ONS: commuting 2011 census

To achieve this we will:

Preserve, develop and promote our natural assets for the enjoyment of all residents and visitors.

Work collaboratively to support the sustainable development and growth of local businesses, to encourage the development of skills and enterprise, to secure investments in business infrastructure to create rewarding and high value jobs for local people.

Encourage, support and promote inclusive cultural activities for all residents and visitors to benefit the local economy, drive creativity and innovation, improve quality of life and enhance our reputation as a cultural centre.

Work to reduce the impacts of our collective activities including our use of transport and energy, our construction methods, food production and water usage and management.

Invest in the social fabric of our town to create an inclusive leisure and cultural offer. This vision provides the basis for our Town Investment Plan

## THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

Ross is the second largest market town in Herefordshire with a population of just over 10,000. According to the English Indices of Deprivation 2019 Ross:

- Is less deprived than the England average on all measures.
- Is the second largest market town in Herefordshire with a population of 11,309; with 8% more over 65s than the national average<sup>7</sup>
- Has fewer jobs per head than the Herefordshire average although relatively higher than all other market towns in the county.
- Experienced an increase in benefit claimants in the early stages of the pandemic (April to September 2020) from 300 to 350 (17%)
- Experienced the loss of 65 jobs (1.3% of the total) between 2015-18.
- Overall highest number of jobs across all 5 towns. Distinctive sectors: manufacturing, wholesale/retail, transport, accommodation and food, real estate, services.
- Has fewer low value and more high value properties than the national average.

Notwithstanding this relative status, however, and in common with the other market towns in the county, the principal challenges for Ross relate to scale and functionality, and a skewed demography in terms of economic workforce.

Relatively low job density, a declining jobs market in the town (pre-covid) with comparatively high levels of out-commuting, combined with a high proportion of over 65s renders the town vulnerable to the persistence of this imbalance between scale, functionality and demographics.

The Ross NDP recognises the need to address these challenges through its principle objectives:

1. To protect and enhance all aspects of the environment.
2. To deliver more housing, in particular to meet local needs.
3. To protect, enhance and diversify the local economy.
4. To ensure an accessible and well-connected town for all.

---

<sup>7</sup> [Lower layer Super Output Area population estimates \(National Statistics\) - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

5. To protect, enhance and diversify the town's social and cultural assets.

The Town Investment Plan proposes a number of 'projects' and interventions that are consistent with these objectives and that would act as the means to deliver the short, medium and long term actions required to effect the changes needed to deliver the Town Vision.

The TIP is primarily an economic development and delivery plan. It seeks to provide an economic rationale for projects on the basis of the benefits and impacts that would be derived as a result of investment and implementation.

The TIP therefore focusses on projects that will, for instance, deliver employment land to support business investment in growth and employment, and projects that will support the growth of tourism by providing facilities and an enhanced visitor experience.

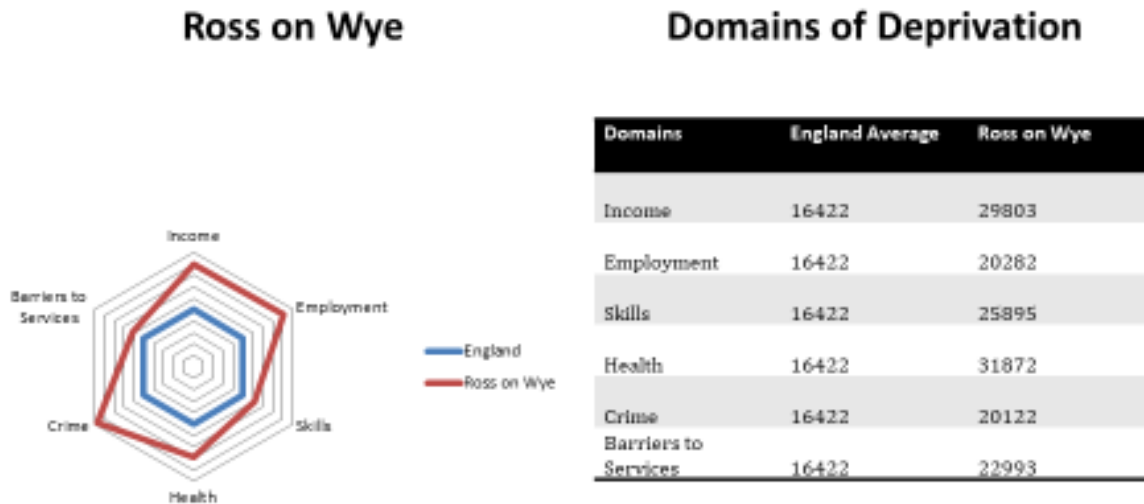
In tandem there are many viable projects and initiatives that are not considered within the TIP, but are contained within other strategic plans, including a number of projects and activities highlighted within the NDP as 'Practical Projects'.

An assessment of employment trends in Ross-on-Wye highlights:

- Fewer jobs per head than the Herefordshire average although relatively higher than all other market towns in the county.
- Increase in benefit claimants (April to September 2020) from 300 to 350 (17%)
- A loss of 65 jobs (1.3% of the total) between 2015-18

We have reviewed the 2019 Indices of deprivation to identify the main challenges facing the town the key findings of this work are summarised below:

## English Indices of Deprivation 2019



The radar diagram ranks all 32,844 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England according to the indices of deprivation. Each LSOA has a population of circa 1,500 people or 650 households.

- The blue line indicates the England average;
- Within the blue line is more deprived;
- Outside the blue line is less deprived.

The radar diagram above is derived from the English Indices of Deprivation 2019. It ranks each neighbourhood in England in terms of their characteristics in relation to the following indicator sets:

- The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
- The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
- The Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- The Crime Domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.

- The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: ‘geographical barriers’, which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and ‘wider barriers’ which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.

### Regional Economic and Industrial Strategy

The Marches Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and the draft Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) highlight some of the issues facing Herefordshire as a whole. These are principally concerned with:

Theme	Issue
Relationship between <i>Growth Points</i> and their hinterlands	Hereford is seen as central to the economic success of a much wider hinterland.
<i>Skills gap</i>	Herefordshire has the second highest proportion of young people classified as NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) in the West Midlands.
<i>Higher education</i>	Enabling students to study locally and attract new students into the area, i.e. through the establishment of NMITE college.
<i>Demography</i>	Herefordshire has a declining working age population.
<i>Connectivity</i>	The peripheral location of Hereford is highlighted as impacting on business efficiency in the area.

The draft LIS identifies major growth opportunities around:

- ensuring future competitiveness and success in high-tech, energy efficient manufacturing and engineering;
- securing the future food supply chain and achieving modern and environmentally sustainable production, packaging and distribution through agri-tech innovation; and
- developing world-renowned excellence in cyber security and resilience.

The challenges facing Ross are similarly reflected across the wider marches region. The Marches Strategic Economic Plan<sup>8</sup> characterises these challenges in terms of ‘market failures’ as follows:

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-Marches-LEP-Strategic-Economic-Plan-2019.pdf>



Market Failure	Impact
A lack of critical mass to drive economic activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduced opportunities for the types of organic growth that arises from business clustering,</li> <li>• more limited opportunities to attract talented employees and inward investment;</li> <li>• long travel distances for business and employees who need to access jobs and markets by car; and</li> <li>• a general lack of economic momentum in growth sectors.</li> </ul>
Lack of identity and appeal to investors	The Marches region does not appear to be on the overseas investors' radar impacting on the area's ability to attract private sector investment at scale.
Limited university offer or graduate jobs leading to a loss of the younger highly skilled generation	<p>This exacerbates demographic trends, where the economic value generated will be dependent upon a shrinking base with greater demands placed upon it.</p> <p>NMITE will provide additional HE capacity in the area of integrated engineering as it builds its first cohorts of students.</p>

## THE TOWN'S ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

### We have set out below the key assets and strengths of the town

The town is located on the A40 which runs through Gloucester to Abergavenny and beyond. The town also has good road links to Birmingham and the Midlands via the M50 motorway (the 'Ross-on-Wye spur' from the M5) and to South Wales via the A40/A449 dual carriageway.

Ross is located within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the River Wye.

Ross contains picturesque buildings, with buildings such as the Market House and The Prospect.

### The Ross Development Trust

The Ross Development Trust RDT was incorporated in 2019 to support local residents in a number of ways. This formal community charitable structure provide the basis for the RDT to undertake delivery activities as an accountable body including some of the projects listed in this Investment Plan.

### The Ross Community Housing Trust

Similarly a nascent Community Housing Trust has been set up with a view to establishing a Community Land Trust for asset transfer of land for housing that would be designated for local residents.



## SPATIAL CONTEXT

Herefordshire's Core Strategy contains a chapter on Place Shaping. This describes Ross-on-Wye as the market town serving the south of the county, and how it will be supported in 'continuing to fulfil a diverse range of roles as a centre for residential, employment, recreational and cultural services'.

Ross-on-Wye also acts as a service centre for the surrounding rural area and connections to the motorway network also make it an important gateway into the county, and a tourist destination in its own right.

The Strategy sets out how strategic growth on the town's periphery as well as smaller scale growth in the town itself will be supported. It describes the 900 new homes proposed southeast of the town at Hildersley [Model Farm] – including the potential for sustainable transport links to the town centre, and the role of the Neighbourhood Development Plan in providing a range of smaller sites of less than 100 dwellings in and around the town.

The Strategy seeks to ensure both this single strategic site and smaller sites are sensitive to the town, its historical features and the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) surrounding it.

The Strategy further signals the need to reduce travel by private car through sustainable transport modes (e.g. walking, cycling) and by promoting local job opportunities. The urban extension, for example, is located on an area of medium-low landscape value and potential new links such as green corridors will be encouraged. Residential development in and around Ross-on-Wye should ensure that areas prone to flooding from the River Wye are avoided and that any future flood risk is addressed through sustainable urban drainage systems.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

At the outset of the commission Ross Town Council set up a well-represented steering group of local and county Councillors to act as an initial and on-going interface with Rose Regeneration. A series of meetings and a town 'walk through' helped to establish an emerging list of projects and the basis for further and wider engagement with a number of local stakeholders.

Further engagement meetings with the Town Council in the early stage of the commission also refined understanding of the objectives of the Town investment Plan process and provided the basis for Rose Regeneration to expand engagement into the wider community stakeholders relating to the projects listed.

A Town Stakeholder Zoom meeting was held in late December 2020 to which all those identified were invited; this meeting was chaired by a Town Councillor and included some twenty stakeholders.

The meeting identified a number of themes for the Town Investment Plan to consider and develop. Principal amongst these themes were concerns in relation to the availability of employment land for local businesses, and the need to maintain and develop facilities and offerings in relation to tourism.

A number of thematic meetings with relevant stakeholders were held to consider the key themes in more detail and identify the vision, strategic objectives and project ideas for inclusion in the Plan.

In parallel, Rose Regeneration has consulted extensively with potential delivery and funding partners. This has included engagement with private landowners, a number of Herefordshire Council officers, local businesses, developers and county-wide and regional sector representatives.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change linked to the projects proposed arising from the strategy is set out below:

Project	Intervention Theme	Issues in Ross	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Model Farm Ross Enterprise Park	Business and Economy	Demand for sustainable employment land and housing	Model Farm development plus associated more modest impacts from other employment related projects	37 acres of new employment land 24,900 m <sup>2</sup> of premises	817 new jobs £57,000,000 GVA pa (HCA) Employment Density and Additionality Guide)	More sustainable settlement based on live/work opportunities for local people	5 years – Ross reaches the county average level of jobs per head 10-15 years – Ross achieves a parity between economically active people and local jobs 30 years – Ross is a sustainable settlement with reduced net outflow of commuters and an enhanced functionality as the core employment base for the south of the county.
Brampton and Sellack Cycleway - Backney picnic area	Visitor Economy	Scope for enhanced visitor economy	Part of a package to deliver Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons, Museum without walls, increased “liveability” linked to sports centre and skate park.	5 miles of new cycle facility	Healthy living and micro-enterprise outcomes – 2 businesses café and cycle hire	Better utilisation of the natural tourism assets of Ross-on-Wye	5 years new tourism infrastructure in place. 10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year. 30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County.
Ryefield Centre	Town/civic amenities	Enhanced community facilities	Development of building as community facility	Creation of a new community meeting space	Enhanced social capital – scope for 2,240 letting sessions (in 2 hour slots)	Healthier and more cohesive community	5 years new tourism infrastructure in place. 10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year. 30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County.

Project	Intervention Theme	Issues in Ross	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons	Visitor Economy	Greater realisation of the potential of river Wye as a visitor asset in Ross-on-Wye	Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons, Museum without walls, increased "liveability" linked to sports centre and skate park.	Property acquisition and refurbishment to provide facilities for river users and create linkages to the town centre.	Assumed 10 beds 4 new jobs £125,000 GVA pa assume. £70 impact per tourist – assume 10,000 tourists over 3 years £700,000 (STEAM 2016 updated)	Stronger tourism infrastructure and visitor accommodation offering making help Ross fulfil its tourism potential	5 years new tourism infrastructure in place. 10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year. 30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County.
Museum Without Walls	Visitor Economy	Scope for enhanced visitor economy	Part of a package including Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons, Museum without walls, increased "liveability" linked to sports centre and skate park.	New augmented reality trail – providing 9 new attraction stations	£70 impact per tourist – assume 10,000 tourists over 3 years £700,000 (STEAM 2016 updated)	Stronger tourism infrastructure and visitor making help Ross fulfil its tourism potential	5 years new tourism infrastructure in place. 10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year. 30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County.
Broadmeadow and Tanyard Lane Development	Business and Economy	Scope for new sustainable mixed use development	Part of a package including Model Farm and Broadmeadow/Tanyard Lane development plus associated more modest impacts from other employment related projects	Mixed use sustainable development covering 18 ha	Based on assumptions linked to development of half of site for economic outcomes - 400 jobs, 28,500,000 GVA p.a (HCA Employment Density & Additionality Guide)	More sustainable settlement based on live/work opportunities for local people	5 years – Ross reaches the county average level of jobs per head 10-15 years – Ross achieves a parity between economically active people and local jobs 30 years – Ross is a sustainable settlement with reduced net outflow of commuters and an enhanced functionality as the core employment base for the south of the county.

Project	Intervention Theme	Issues in Ross	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Skate park	Town/civic amenities	Dilapidated leisure infrastructure meriting enhancement	Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons, Museum without walls, increased “liveability” linked to sports centre and skate park.	Enhanced community facilities	Healthy living and micro-enterprise outcomes – 2 businesses café and cycle hire	Healthier and more cohesive community	5 years new visitor infrastructure in place. 10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year. 30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County.
Sports Centre	Town/civic amenities	Dilapidated leisure infrastructure meriting enhancement	Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons, Museum without walls, increased “liveability” linked to sports centre and skate park.	Enhanced community facilities	Healthy living and micro-enterprise outcomes – 2 businesses café and cycle hire	Healthier and more cohesive community	5 years new tourism infrastructure in place. 10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year. 30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County.
Market House and Apron Plaza	Public Realm/Commercial Development	Enhanced community facilities	Part of a package of civic amenity investments which will increase the attractiveness and “liveability” of Ross on Wye	Creation of a new community meeting space	Enhanced social capital –	Healthier and more cohesive community	5 years enhanced townscape increases the civic appeal of the town and its visitor numbers. 10-15 years a pattern of private sector investment in the urban fabric of Ross on Wye emerges. 30 years Ross on Wye has a well established sustainable mix of people and visitors supported by a dynamic civic core of amenities

Project	Intervention Theme	Issues in Ross	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
High St Pedestrianisation	Public Realm	Tired Public Realm	Part of a package of civic amenity investments which will increase the attractiveness and “liveability” of Ross on Wye	Better functionality for the town	£70 impact per tourist – assume 10,000 tourists over 3 years £700,000 (STEAM 2016 updated)	More people with access to a more viable living environment	5 years enhanced townscape increases the civic appeal of the town and its visitor numbers. 10-15 years a pattern of private sector investment in the urban fabric of Ross on Wye emerges. 30 years Ross on Wye has a well established sustainable mix of people and visitors supported by a dynamic civic core of amenities
Shop/building frontage grant scheme	Tourism/Visitors Town /Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Part of a package of civic amenity investments which will increase the attractiveness and “liveability” of Ross on Wye	Improved Built environment in the Town	More footfall and private investment	More demand to visit and invest in the town	5 years enhanced townscape increases the civic appeal of the town and its visitor numbers. 10-15 years a pattern of private sector investment in the urban fabric of Ross on Wye emerges. 30 years Ross on Wye has a well established sustainable mix of people and visitors supported by a dynamic civic core of amenities

## PROJECTS

The following projects and ‘investment themes’ emerged through the stakeholder engagement process. These projects and themes were validated through a wider stakeholder meeting in late December 2020 and subsequent group and one to one discussions in the first quarter of 2021.

The table below provides a short form summary by way of an overview of projects and themes, those projects that could be considered appropriate for Herefordshire Employment Land and Incubation Space capital programme funding and individual descriptions of those projects that are considered strategically significant, with the potential to attract funding outside of the Council. It is supported by a theory of change and Transformation Table, showing our aspirations for impact.

The package of projects identified in this Town Investment Plan will need to access a range of funding sources in order to be delivered.

Herefordshire Council has earmarked some £20million for Employment Land and Incubation Space development in its capital programme as an investment pot for capital projects in the county's five market towns.

This funding can be used by the council to invest in projects which can demonstrate an appropriate business case which show the ability of the projects to generate capital receipts or income which can be used to pay back the initial investment over time. Some of the projects in the Plan may secure funding through this route subject to detailed business cases being developed and considered by the council.

The majority of the projects identified will need to explore alternative funding options which could include private investment including: Heritage Lottery; charitable trusts; other public sector funding such as the capital programmes of the West Mercia Police Service; the Hereford and Worcester Fire service; the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group; the Marches LEP; Homes England etc. In addition to these sources of funding there are a range of Government funding opportunities already in place and more will be announced going forward. Some of the projects in the Plan will require revenue funding as well as capital investment. There may be opportunities to package projects together to bid for funding as well as to bid for funds in phases on the larger projects. Different funders will require different information and governance arrangements which will need to be considered on a bid by bid basis. The evidence base and supporting information produced to support this Plan will be a useful information and policy context to help inform bids for funding.

The following project ideas are also at a very early stage of development

- Managed workshops & workspace
- Digital Noticeboard
- Purchase of land for recreation
- Town Market

In May 2021 the Town Council and wider stakeholders met to consider the relative priority to allocate to each project. A scoring matrix based on the good practice methodology identified by the Town Hub which supports the implementation of the Town Fund was used to assess the relative merit of each project. Within the matrix there are 8 themes chosen through engagement with local stakeholders.

For Ross-on-Wye the key criteria agreed were: contribution to net zero; attraction of more visitors/inward investment; increased GVA (a measure of the productivity of businesses); increased business diversity (an increase to the range and variety of businesses operating locally); higher skills; better population balance (supporting a wide demographic spread of age groups); greater equity (supporting fairer access to all determinants of quality of life) and equality agenda (eliminating any form of discrimination). Each project was scored by the group on a scale of 1-5 where one is lowest to provide a group composite score. These scores then used to rank the project as set out in the summary table below.



Project	Summary
Ross Enterprise Park	The Ross Enterprise Park site is owned by Herefordshire Council and it has been a longstanding employment land allocation. The gross site area is 15 hectares / 37 acres and has outline planning consent for 29,400 m <sup>2</sup> for B1, B2 and B8 floor space and full consent for access off the A40. It is recognised that this strategically significant site may also provide an opportunity for housing development in the future.
Broadmeadow and Tanyard Lane Development	This is an area just over 18 hectares. It was considered in the 2011 SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments). The proposal supported through options in the NDP is for a mixed use development and is encouraged because of the importance to Ross as a whole of such a large area stretching from the town centre to the A40. Ross Town Council wishes to control the development of the site which is complex and in multiple ownership. As a first step RTC wishes to develop a comprehensive site masterplan in order to: 1. encourage the various landowners to stand firm around their in-principle agreement for equalisation of land values. 2. Prevent piece-meal development. 3. Deliver a mixed-use development that responds to the needs of the town in terms of employment land provision. Provisional budget - £40 million
Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons	Potentially based on existing dilapidated properties in third party ownership - the project involves property acquisition and refurbishment to provide facilities for river users and create linkages to the town centre. The property in question is in a prominent and highly visible location. Its current state of dilapidation impacts negatively on the broader townscape and has no economic function. This we believe is a viable project, but there are significant barriers to the private sector including inter alia the costs of refurbishment. In any event it would be unlikely that a purely private sector model would deliver the wider river based activities and investments that are part of this project. There is a strong case for public sector intervention in addressing market failures, especially if the project delivers the business opportunities and expands river usage to the benefit of other operators. Provisional budget - £700,000
Sports Centre	The building known as Ross Sports Centre (RSC) and the football fields are currently leased from Herefordshire County Council on a 30 year lease by Ross on Wye Sports Club CIC (previously Ross on Wye Sports Centre CIC). Ross on Wye Sports Centre CIC took over the lease from Herefordshire Council in 2012. A needs assessment identified that there is an under-supply of sports pitches in Ross; that improving levels of sport participation and engaging in a healthy lifestyle is a key priority for Herefordshire; that for the centre to operate viably and sustainably it should have a stakeholder club-led structure; that there is a need for facility improvements particularly with regard to improving disabled access, changing accommodation, social facilities that can generate income and the quality of the sports pitches. Provisional budget - £2 million
Ryefield Centre	Asset transfer of Ryefield Centre to a CIC or similar body for community use, possibly with HC leasing some space to provide access to services in Ross. Potential to free up space in Larruperz Centre (next door) to allow conversion of large hall to tiered auditorium, which is a lack in Ross. The proposal offers the potential to improve community spaces and provide a medium sized teared auditorium for Arts events, currently a lack in the town. Provisional budget - £1.5 million



Project	Summary
Brampton & Sellack Cycleway/Cycle network development	<p>This is a joint project proposed with neighbouring Parishes including Brampton Abbots and Sellack Parishes It involves the restoration of a pedestrian/cycle bridge at Backney and utilising the disused Ross to Hereford railway line. This would open up a range of circular walks and access to a picnic site that provides access on to Backney Common.</p> <p>Ross Town Council could make available an area of car parking for cycle hire and other facilities.</p> <p>This project could in time link into the National Cycling Network through the refurbishment of the disused rail line leading into and out of the town and linked to Hereford city centre with a continuation of the old railway route with a subsequent river crossing at Baysham and Pen-allt linking into Holme Lacy. Provisional budget - £650,000</p>
Market House and Plaza Apron	<p>To renovate the 17th Century Market House via one of 2 options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to 'glass in' the ground floor of the Market House,</li> <li>• to seek Herefordshire Council's permission to terrace the Market Apron and create a central focus to the Town Centre.</li> </ul> <p>Provisional budget - £1.5 million</p>
Museum Without Walls	<p>This project would provide an augmented reality cultural trail at sites across Ross-on-Wye with the potential to become a significant tourist attraction. Funding is required to facilitate an additional 9 attractions (3 already created with funding from ACE and Hidden Gems) rendered in 3D and accessible via a dedicated free App. Each exhibit will capture either a lost aspect of the town's cultural past or imagine what the future may hold. The three exhibits currently operating that provide proof of concept are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lost Fountain (The Prospect)</li> <li>• Underhill (Market House)</li> <li>• River boats from the Wye Tour (Riverside)</li> </ul> <p>Provisional budget - £200,000</p>
High Street pedestrianisation & Enhancing Town Walkway	<p>To investigate the viability of closing the High Street to traffic for specified hours of the day to allow use of the highway by cafes and restaurants as well as for events.</p> <p>Provisional budget - £100,000</p>
Skate park	<p>This project aims to improve the existing Ross skate park to a higher 'national' standard and to provide additional facilities within the existing site to include a 5-aside football/basketball court concrete table tennis, a Football wall with holes to score goals.</p> <p>Provisional budget - £350,000</p>
Shop Front Grant Scheme	<p>Financial support to encourage businesses based in Ross to revitalise their shop front.</p> <p>Provisional budget - £200,000</p>

A detailed project scoring matrix showing the working for the prioritisation process is set out at Appendix 2

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Model Farm – Ross Enterprise Park

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
<p><i>Description</i> Ross Enterprise Park - The Ross Enterprise Park site is owned by Herefordshire Council and it has been a long standing employment land allocation. The gross site area is 15 hectares / 37 acres and has outline planning consent for 29,400 m<sup>2</sup> for B1, B2 and B8 floor space and full consent for access off the A40. The site is contiguous to land that is currently allocated housing land with extant permissions. This land is in the ownership separately of Herefordshire Council, a private landowner and the MOD with advanced discussions on development and an agreement that is currently in abeyance and not formally constituted. This agreement includes the potential for servicing the Model Farm site as part of a wider housing scheme that requires easements over the Model Farm site for drainage purposes.</p>					
Demand Analysis	<p>Engagement with agents and businesses through the development of the Plan has identified significant local demand for employment land. There is a need for public sector intervention in delivery via both its current 2 separate landholdings and co-ordinating the interests of the parties involved.</p>		£20M (est)	5 years	<p>The gross site area is 15 hectares / 37 acres and has outline planning consent for 29,400 m<sup>2</sup> for B1, B2 and B8 floor space and full consent for access off the A40. The site is contiguous to land that is currently allocated housing land with extant permissions.</p>
Potential funding sources	<p>Model Farm development could be brought forward on a phased basis by Herefordshire Council including the potential for housing which could attract support of Homes England. Planning risks for the employment plan are largely mitigated through extant consents.</p>				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	<p>The development will generate capital receipts and rent for the Council</p>				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Ross Sports Centre					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description</i> The building known as Ross Sports Centre (RSC) and the football fields are currently leased from Herefordshire County Council on a 30 year lease by Ross on Wye Sports Club CIC (previously Ross on Wye Sports Centre CIC). Ross on Wye Sports Centre CIC took over the lease from Herefordshire Council in 2012. A needs assessment identified that there is an under-supply of sports pitches in Ross; that improving levels of sport participation and engaging in a healthy lifestyle is a key priority for Herefordshire; that for the Centre to operate viably and sustainably it should have a stakeholder club-led structure; that there is a need for facility improvements particularly with regard to improving disabled access, changing accommodation, social facilities that can generate income and the quality of the sports pitches.</p> <p>The economic value of sport is well evidenced at local community level by, inter alia, Sport England. Value is generated through a variety of outcomes including health and wellbeing benefits, and the economic value of volunteering activities which are significant in respect of local sport participation.</p>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			£2M (est)	18 months	Enhanced facilities to meet national sports standards
			<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Strong evidence of need and demand and potential for growth of activities via the CIC operating the centre and activities.	
			<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Possible grant funding for improved sports facilities/ improved public health.	
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	Existing CIC structure offers a potential vehicle to deliver project and manage operations and revenues.				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Ross Skate Park					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description</i> This project aims to improve the existing Ross skate park to a higher 'national' standard and to provide additional facilities within the existing site to include a 5-a-side football/basketball court concrete table tennis, a Football wall with holes to score goals. This project is aimed at providing a venue for young people in the town, providing facilities of a high standard to encourage wider participation as well as providing, in the case of the skate park, a competition and training venue. It would also provide a focus for youth related services to engage with young people to identify issues and provide support and interventions.</p> <p>The economic value of sport related activities is well evidenced at local community level by, inter alia, Sport England. Value is generated through a variety of outcomes including health and wellbeing benefits, specifically the positive benefits that would accrue to young people and the wider community benefits through the development of civic responsibility and social skills. The Park would provide a facility for youth outreach services to support an often difficult to reach cohort.</p>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			£350K (est)	6 months	High quality national standard skate and recreation park
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	This project is a long standing aspiration for the town for which there is strong support.				
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	There is scope to link this to the Ross Sports Centre initiative and to connect the people promoting the project to the Extreme Sports Town initiative in Hereford. A range of funding sources have been successfully used in other towns in the UK including Developer Contributions, Town council funding, local playing fields associations, a range of community association operated by retailers including the Co-op and ASDA, the National Lottery Community Fund and other local private sector service providers e.g. the Veolia Environmental fund. A comprehensive design and plan would need to be produced for the purposes of fund raising through an appropriate body such as a development trust or linked to the Sports Centre CIC.				
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	Revenue and national/local sponsorship opportunities could provide the basis for on-going management and maintenance along with competition related activities providing revenue, advertising and promotion income.				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Broadmeadow & Tanyard Lane Development

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
<p><i>Description</i> This is an area just over 18 hectares. It was considered in the 2011 SHLAA:  Ross Town Council wishes to control the development of the site which is complex and in multiple ownership. As a first step RTC wishes to develop a comprehensive site masterplan in order to: 1. encourage the various landowners to stand firm around their in-principle agreement for equalisation of land values. 2. Prevent piece-meal development. 3. Deliver a mixed-use development that responds to the needs of the town in terms of employment land provision.</p>					
Demand Analysis	<p>The proposal is supported through options in the NDP is for a mixed use development and is encouraged because of the importance to Ross as a whole of such a large area stretching from the town centre to the A40.</p>		Est £40 Million	Within 10 years	Mix of housing, retail and commercial space
Potential funding sources	<p>Parts of the site could be considered conventionally viable, but other areas (notably the core of Broadmeadows) would not be viable for housing. Mixed use to include:  C3a: Housing including affordable homes  B1a: Offices  B1a and B1c: R&amp;D and light industry  Public Open Spaces and squares.</p>				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	N/A				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p>A riverside facility to increase river based activities and tourism in the town is considered to be an investment of strategic importance to Ross. There is the potential to deliver this project based on a current opportunity to acquire a dilapidated property in third party ownership - the project would involve property acquisition by the Town Council and refurbishment to provide facilities for river users and create linkages to the town centre. The property in question is in a prominent and highly visible location. Its current state of dilapidation impacts negatively on the broader townscape and has no economic function. This we believe is a viable project, but there are significant barriers to the private sector including inter alia the costs of refurbishment. In any event it would be unlikely that a purely private sector model would deliver the wider river based activities and investments that are part of this project. There is a strong case for public sector intervention in addressing market failures, especially if the project delivers the business opportunities and expands river usage to the benefit of other operators.</p>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			<p><b>Demand Analysis</b></p> <p>There is scope to link this initiative to the development of the River Wye Infrastructure in the Hereford Town Plan. It would also link to a similar scheme operated by a local Parish Council that generates revenues via this model. The river is an under-utilised and currently under-exploited tourist asset with the potential to deliver facilities and revenues from opening up and delivering economic and tourist related activities which could create new business and employment opportunities.</p>	<p>£700k (est)</p>	<p>18 months</p>
<p><b>Potential funding sources</b></p> <p>Revenues generated could service debt finance subject to a business plan and sourcing of loan provider such as the Marches Investment Fund.</p>					
<p><b>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</b></p> <p>The development would enable revenue generation via fees and income from sales with the option for third party operator as Community Interest Company.</p>					

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Museum Without Walls

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p>This project would provide an augmented reality cultural trail at sites across Ross on Wye with the potential to become a significant tourist attraction. Funding is required to facilitate an additional 9 attractions (3 already created with funding from ACE and Hidden Gems) rendered in 3D and accessible via a dedicated free App. Each exhibit will capture either a lost aspect of the town's cultural past or imagine what the future may hold. The three exhibits currently operating that provide proof of concept are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lost Fountain (The Prospect)</li> <li>• Underhill (Market House)</li> <li>• River boats from the Wye Tour (Riverside)</li> </ul>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			Demand Analysis	<p>Initial elements of this project have been delivered via grant funding and provide the proof of concept. Launch of these elements in May 2021 will further prove viability in the technical execution of the project. Tourism is a key economic driver for the town and requires investment in both physical and virtual infrastructure to meet market demand and expectation and to increase both the volume and value of visits to the town (higher per visitor spend, longer visitor stays).</p>	£200k (est)
Potential funding sources	A range of funding options exist through national funding streams				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	The project would seek to be self-funding through subscription services, advertising and sponsorship, operated and Managed by Create Ross.				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Brampton and Sellack Cycleway - Backney picnic area

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
<p>Description: This is a joint project proposed with neighbouring Parishes including Brampton Abbots and Sellack Parishes It involves the restoration of a pedestrian/cycle bridge at Backney and utilising the disused Ross to Hereford railway line. This would open up a range of circular walks and access to a picnic site that provides access on to Backney Common. Ross Town Council could make available an area of car parking for cycle hire and other facilities. This project could in time link in to the National Cycling Network through the refurbishment of the disused rail line leading into and out of the town and linked to Hereford city centre with a continuation of the old railway route with a subsequent river crossing at Baysham and Pen-alt linking into Holme Lacy</p>					
Demand Analysis	Herefordshire Council have estimated that the potential usage of this route could exceed 46,000 journeys a year.				
Potential funding sources	This project could be funded through the Lottery and other relevant charitable donors. The link to health and wellbeing and the recent Social prescribing CLOVER project in Ross also opens other avenues for funding. As part of the wider Herefordshire Tourism strategy this project would form an important component and should work closely with visitor economy partners.		£864,200, (if a timber bridge is employed)	18 Months	3km new walking/cycling route. Open up local beauty spot for visitors. Improved Health outcomes through Health Prescribing by local GPs.
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Ownership of BBPS transferred from Herefordshire Council to Sellack Parish Council about two years ago. This project could become self-sustaining through charging for services including car-parking and equipment hire where opportunities for small business development could be encouraged.				



### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Ross-on-Wye: Ryefield Centre Asset transfer – opening up opportunity for community, performance space and conferences through combined space with the adjacent Larrupertz Centre.

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
<p>Description: This project would involve the asset transfer of Ryefield Centre by Herefordshire Council to a local CIC or similar body for community use, possibly with HC leasing some space to provide access to services in Ross. The project creates the potential to free up space in Larrupertz Centre (next door) to allow conversion of a large hall to a tiered auditorium for multi-use as a theatre/performing arts space, conference venue and other related activities which Ross currently lacks. Cost relates to the repurposing of the Larrupertz Centre, refurbishment of internal spaces in both buildings and renovation of the frontages.</p>					
Demand Analysis	<p>Community survey in summer 2020 (95 responses) showed strong support for the proposal and suggestions on potential uses. Services for vulnerable people, youth/children and community group support were the top priorities.</p>				<p>New theatre, auditorium and conference space. New spaces for community groups at the Larrupertz and Ryefield.</p>
Potential funding sources	<p>Asset transfer of the Ryefield Centre would provide the basis for a project proposal to inter alia the Arts Council for a significant element of the cost of works. Other funding sources, including lottery and local 'community chest' type grants, section 106 contributions with the potential for a community fund raising programme would could support up to 30% of costs by way of match.</p>		£1.5 million (est)	Asset transfer to be completed by 12/22	<p>Maintenance of face to face HC services in Ross</p>
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	<p>The CIC model has worked well at the neighbouring Larrupertz where, pre-Covid, the main problem was lack of space to meet demand. The current management structure is considered fit for purpose to assume responsibility for the additional asset and the management of works as proposed.</p>				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Pedestrianisation of the High Street including a new crossing at Wilton Road/Wye Street (within the Ross Movement Study – projects 55 & 56) – linked to the Market Hall and Plaza project as an enhanced route linking the high street and the river

Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
<p><i>Description:</i> This project is directly linked to the Market Hall and Plaza project in its aspiration to effect a significant improvement to the high street and enhance the walking route through important parts of the town and connect to the river. These are discreet projects in themselves, but should be considered as a ‘package’ of investments delivering a number of enhancement and benefits to the town and its tourism and retail offering. The pedestrianisation of the high street and the new crossing at Wilton Road are projects contained in the Ross Movement Study (Draft yet to be adopted). The consultation with Ward members in the Movement Study found: <i>“Consideration of a preferred package that encompasses the following is seen as the priority for future delivery: • Pedestrianisation of the High Street running from the Market House to Edde Cross Street (scheme 55) • Extension of the pavement running under the Town walls in Wilton Road to Royal Parade • New pedestrian crossing in Wilton Road from Town Wall to near top of Wye Street (No. 56) • Improved traffic management measures in Copse Cross St/south section of High St”.</i></p> <p>In a post-Covid world, outdoor seating will be increasingly important to the hospitality industry but few businesses in the High street have any. Pedestrianisation would also help link the town centre with the Prospect gardens and will support developing the Market House as a destination.</p>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			Est. <£1Million	Within 12 Months from full approval by HC Highways	The area of high street between broad street and church street or possibly St. Marys Street would become available as temporary retail space.
Demand Analysis	There are clearly concerns amongst the High Street retailers of the potential impact of closing the High Street to vehicles. The evidence from schemes of this nature across the country is that this can and often does result in an increase in foot fall and spend at those times.				
Potential funding sources	<p>The Ross Movement study identifies Funding sources for identified schemes as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herefordshire Council’s Public Realm Annual Plan</li> <li>• S106 – Developer funding</li> <li>• Grant – third party funding sources such as DfT,               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes England,</li> <li>• Local Enterprise Partnerships, or similar bidding opportunities as they arise</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				

Investment Proposal Form				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	The operation of the scheme would be managed and maintained by RTC with no recourse to funds from HC except those within Highways funding scope.			

Investment Proposal Form			
Project Name: Ross Shop/ building frontage grant scheme			
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>
<p><i>Description:</i> Investment in the public realm needs to be complemented by investment in the frontages of shops and other town centre buildings to make the town a place to visit and spend time in. A grant scheme is required to encourage property owners to invest in town centre properties. It is suggested that any grant from the scheme would require a contribution from the property owner.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
		<i>Outputs</i>	
Demand Analysis	Chamber of Trade and stakeholder feedback	£200,000	1 – 5 years
Potential funding sources	Private Sector, Government Grants, Heritage Lottery,		
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	The ongoing maintenance responsibilities will stay with the current property owners.		
			At least 30 properties improved

## Market House & Market Apron Revitalisation

Investment Proposal Form			
Project Name: Market House & Market Apron Revitalisation – part of wider pedestrianisation scheme project			
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>
<p><i>Description:</i> This is a potentially transformative project for Ross High Street and the wider town when considered in the context of the pedestrianisation of the High Street and investments in the routes linking the town and the river. This combined package of investments would deliver significant benefits in terms of the community and tourism offer, and support a stronger, more diverse and resilient High Street retail offering. RTC is already committing funds and seeking grants to renovate the 17th Century Market House, and has commissioned an Architect to prepare the tender documentation set. Two options are being considered, one is to 'glass in' the ground floor of the Market House, and the second is to seek Herefordshire County Council's permission to terrace the Market Apron and create a central focus to the Town Centre. E.g. on non-market days extending the popular 'tables under the market house' service. It will also create opportunities to hire out the ground floor of the Market House.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
		£1M - £1.5M and the RTC could contribute £200k.	Planning & tendering during 2021, and completion by Sept 2022.
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Last summer the 5/6 tables under the Market house were very popular, particularly on sunny days. They restarted in April 2021 and are proving popular again.		It will attract greater footfall within the Town Centre, supporting 6+ independent coffee/ tea rooms. Two direct jobs created Indoor Floor space: TBD (not measured) Outdoor Floor space: TBD (not measured)
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Ross Town Council would seek to contribute £200k. other sources of funding include Historic England and National Lottery with		
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	RTC would maintain the terraced Market Apron		

## Next Steps

This is one of five Market Town Economic Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council for each of Herefordshire's market towns.

Herefordshire Council has identified projects which could be funded by them through the Employment Land and Business Space capital programme allocation. As a result in addition to this Market Town Investment Plan, Rose Regeneration has completed Outline Business Cases (OBCs) and Project Mandates for the following projects for the council's consideration.

OBC's have been developed and submitted for:

- Ross Enterprise Park

Project Mandates have been developed and submitted for:

- Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse and pontoons
- Broadmeadow and Tanyard Lane development

Once the Plans, OBCs and Project Mandates have been considered by Herefordshire Council it is recommended that the council works with the five Market Town Councils to establish an appropriate delivery mechanism to oversee, secure funding for and monitor the delivery of the Market Town Economic Investment Plans.

This delivery mechanism should be led and supported by Herefordshire Council and should involve representatives from each Town Council.

## APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

National context	Regional Context	Herefordshire Context	Ross-on-Wye Context
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Industrial Strategy</i> – ‘places’ foundation: tackling entrenched regional disparities.</li> <li>• Industrial Strategy <i>Productivity Evidence Review</i> – some cities and rural county areas have been falling behind, including Herefordshire. County Councils Network <i>analysis of GVA</i> in 36 county areas found Herefordshire to be experiencing the smallest economic growth 5.3% between 2014 and 2018).</li> <li>• A low carbon future in a changing climate – UK obligations under the 2015 Paris Agreement - setting a net zero target for carbon emissions by 2050.</li> <li>• <i>HM Treasury/Government</i> department resources - levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people.</li> <li>• Build Better, Build Greener, Build Faster - reforming the planning system (<i>NPPF, Planning for the Future White Paper</i>) to give more emphasis to quality, design and the environment.</li> <li>• COVID-19 recovery measures - protecting and restoring livelihoods, improving living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Local Industrial Strategy</i> and <i>Strategic Economic Plan</i> – inclusive growth, connectivity, skills, enterprise and innovation, trade and investment. Herefordshire’s sectoral specialisms: food and drink, education, advanced manufacturing and engineering, defence and construction. Ross-on-Wye as an ‘opportunity town’ – linked to urban centres and intended to strengthen the Marches as a single economic entity.</li> <li>○ <i>Skills Plan</i> and <i>Skills Sectors Deep Dives</i> – the provision of Higher Education provision and Further Education courses relevant to these growth opportunities in Herefordshire.</li> <li>○ Cyber Resilience Alliance / <i>Science and Innovation Audit</i> – the largest cluster of cyber security activity outside of London: growth in direct jobs, wider investment in products and processes and acting as a regional testbed.</li> <li>○ <i>Growth Hub</i> and <i>Enterprise Zone</i> with specialisms in defence and security at Skylon Park, Hereford.</li> <li>○ <i>Niche tourism offer</i> with potential to increase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Herefordshire is a cold spot for social mobility – it is in the bottom 20 list of Local Authorities in England in terms of the chances that disadvantaged children will do well at school and get a good job.</li> <li>▪ The importance of creating high-quality, highly skilled jobs against a backdrop of traditional low-skill, low-wage economy.</li> <li>▪ <i>County Plan</i> – improving sustainability, connectivity, wellbeing and becoming carbon neutral by 2030-2031: Talk Community (hubs), community wealth building (increasing the amount of money that stays in the local economy); and Sustainable Food County (a whole system approach to tackling obesity, diet related ill health, food poverty, waste and climate change).</li> <li>▪ <i>Hereford Town Investment Plan</i> – intended to deliver urban regeneration, a stronger skills base, and improved connectivity in the city. Under the strapline ‘green and fair’ the PLAN recognises Hereford’s</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Herefordshire Economic Vision</i> – enabling market towns to maximise their role in building thriving and distinctive service centres.</li> <li>➤ The <i>Neighbourhood Development Plan</i> includes a Vision of Ross-on-Wye in 2031 which is <i>...even more attractive for me and my family as a place to live in, and also for people to visit there are now many more visitors than there used to be. All the extra houses, which are nicely designed to reflect the distinctive character of Ross have not swamped the town. In face they – or rather their occupants – seem to have added to the vitality of the town, certainly to its various shops (no longer empty), cafes, places to meet and general feel (so many old buildings now spruced up).</i> The Plan focuses on environment, housing, working and shopping, getting around and leisure and wellbeing; and contains 42 practical projects.</li> <li>➤ The <i>Core Strategy</i> describes Ross-on-Wye as the market town serving the south of the county, fulfilling a diverse range of roles as a centre for residential, employment, recreational and cultural services. It acts as a service centre for the surrounding rural area and with connections to the motorway network also makes it an important gateway into the county,</li> </ul>

<p>standards and new economic opportunities.</p>	<p>awareness and visibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Economic recovery plan</i> – investment in infrastructure and jobs: Hereford city streetscape improvements and NMITE Skylon campus development.</li> </ul>	<p>connectivity to market towns and countryside (e.g. tourism – attract and disperse approach).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Telling stories about place, identifying and implementing a vision, strong partnership working and securing funding/investment are all needed for pandemic Recovery and Transformation.</li> <li>▪ <i>Hereford Transport Strategy</i> describes traffic flows, delays and congestion schemes which increase physical activity (e.g. cycling, walking) generate high value-for-money.</li> </ul>	<p>and a tourist destination in its own right. It contains a target for Ross-on-Wye to develop 900 houses and 10 hectares of employment land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ These targets will be met through the Model Farm development (an urban extension) and smaller sites set out in the Neighbourhood Development Plan.</li> <li>➤ <i>Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025</i> refers to how the town has a distinctive spire and skyline, Devonian Old Red Sandstone buildings and cliffs. <i>National Character Area Profile 104</i>: the town has transport routes such as the A40 (south of Ross-on-Wye) and M50. Much of the town is in a Conservation Area regarded as ‘at risk’.</li> <li>➤ In the NDP, any new developments should enhance the overall character and sustainability of the town through a consideration of character and design, landscape, green infrastructure, local green spaces, retaining/encouraging employment, and retaining/encouraging new community facilities.</li> <li>➤ Harnessing growth and development opportunities not only requires sensitivity towards built and natural environments, but also lead to accessibility improvements within the town.</li> </ul>
--------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



## APPENDIX 2 – PROJECT PRIORITISATION

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (.000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Score
Ross Enterprise Park (10 acres)	Employment Space/Housing	The Ross Enterprise Park site is owned by Herefordshire Council and it has been a long standing employment land allocation. The gross site area is 15 hectares / 37 acres and has outline planning consent for 29,400 m <sup>2</sup> for B1, B2 and B8 floor space and full consent for access off the A40. The site is contiguous to land that is currently allocated housing land with extant permissions. This land is in the ownership separately of Herefordshire Council, a private landowner and the MOD with advanced discussions on development and an agreement that is currently in abeyance and not formally constituted. This agreement includes the potential for servicing the Model Farm site as part of a wider housing scheme that requires easements over the Model Farm site for drainage purposes.	£2,000	5	5	5	4	4	5	3	88.75%
Broadmeadow and Tanyard Lane Development-Ross	Employment Space/Housing	This is an area just over 18 hectares. It was considered in the 2011 SHLAA: The proposal supported through options in the NDP is for a mixed use development and is encouraged because of the importance to Ross as a whole of such a large area stretching from the town centre to the A40. Ross Town Council wishes to control the development of the site which is complex and in multiple ownership. As a first step RTC wishes to develop a comprehensive site masterplan in order to: 1. encourage the various landowners to stand firm around their in-principle agreement for equalisation of land values. 2. Prevent piece-meal development. 3. Deliver a mixed-use development that responds to the	£40,000	4	4	4	3	5	4	5	85.00%

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Score
		needs of the town in terms of employment land provision.									
Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons - Ross	Tourism/Commercial Development	Potentially based on existing dilapidated properties in third party ownership - the project involves property acquisition and refurbishment to provide facilities for river users and create linkages to the town centre. The property in question is in a prominent and highly visible location. Its current state of dilapidation impacts negatively on the broader townscape and has no economic function. This we believe is a viable project, but there are significant barriers to the private sector including inter alia the costs of refurbishment. In any event it would be unlikely that a purely private sector model would deliver the wider river based activities and investments that are part of this project. There is a strong case for public sector intervention in addressing market failures, especially if the project delivers the business opportunities and expands river usage to the benefit of other operators.	£700	5	3	4	2	2	5	4	72.50%

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Score
Sports Centre - Ross	Community Space	The building known as Ross Sports Centre (RSC) and the football fields are currently leased from Herefordshire County Council on a 30 year lease by Ross on Wye Sports Club CIC (previously Ross on Wye Sports Centre CIC). Ross on Wye Sports Centre CIC took over the lease from Herefordshire Council in 2012. A needs assessment identified that there is an under-supply of sports pitches in Ross; that improving levels of sport participation and engaging in a healthy lifestyle is a key priority for Herefordshire; that for the Centre to operate viably and sustainably it should have a stakeholder club-led structure; that there is a need for facility improvements particularly with regard to improving disabled access, changing accommodation, social facilities that can generate income and the quality of the sports pitches	£2,000	3	2	3	2.5	3	5	5	66.25%
Ryefield Centre - Ross	Community Space	Asset transfer of Ryefield Centre to a CIC or similar body for community use, possibly with HC leasing some space to provide access to services in Ross. Potential to free up space in Larruperz Centre (next door) to allow conversion of large hall to tiered auditorium, which is a lack in Ross. The proposal offers the potential to improve community spaces and provide a medium sized tiered auditorium for Arts events, currently a lack in the town.	£1,500	4	3	3.5	3	2	4	3	63.75%

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Score
Brampton & Sellack Cycleway/Cycle network development - Ross on Wye	Green Infrastructure	This is a joint project proposed with neighbouring Parishes including Brampton Abbots and Sellack Parishes It involves the restoration of a pedestrian/cycle bridge at Backney and utilising the disused Ross to Hereford railway line. This would open up a range of circular walks and access to a picnic site that provides access on to Backney Common. Ross Town Council could make available an area of car parking for cycle hire and other facilities. This project could in time link in to the National Cycling Network through the refurbishment of the disused rail line leading into and out of the town and linked to Hereford city centre with a continuation of the old railway route with a subsequent river crossing at Baysham and Pen-alt linking into Holme Lacy	£650	5	3	2	2	3	4	4	62.50%
Market House and Apron Plaza	Public Realm/Commercial Development	Creation of a café and renovation of 17th Century Market House and land terracing	£1,500	5	4	4	2	2	2	2	62.50%
Museum Without Walls - Ross	Tourism	This project would provide an augmented reality cultural trail at sites across Ross on Wye with the potential to become a significant tourist attraction. Funding is required to facilitate an additional 9 attractions (3 already created with funding from ACE and Hidden Gems) rendered in 3D and accessible via a dedicated free App. Each exhibit will capture either a lost aspect of the town's cultural past or imagine what the future may hold. The three exhibits currently operating that provide proof of concept are: • The Lost Fountain (The Prospect) • Underhill (Market House) • River boats from the Wye Tour (Riverside)	£200	5	3	3	2	2	2	2	60.00%
High St Pedestrianisation	Public Realm	Tourism and Visitor Economy	£100	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	60.00%

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Score
Skate Park - Ross	Community Space	This project aims to improve the existing Ross skate park to a higher 'national' standard and to provide additional facilities within the existing site to include a 5-aside football/basketball court concrete table tennis, a Football wall with holes to score goals.	£350	3	2	2	2	4	4	4	55.00%
Shop Front Grant Scheme - Ross	Commercial Development	Financial support to encourage businesses based in Ross to revitalise their shop front.	£200	3	2	3	0	2	2	3	42.50%



# Ledbury Investment Plan 2021



June 2021

---

*As a prosperous market town, Ledbury will continue to be a vibrant, thriving community, both socially and economically, with an attractive, well managed and safe built environment in sympathy with the surrounding natural landscape. The town will continue to be a popular destination as an attractive place to shop for residents, the local rural community and visitors, with a successful tourist industry celebrating the town's heritage.*

### **Ledbury Town Investment Plan Statement 2021**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Background	7
The Main Challenges Facing the Town	10
The Vision for Ledbury	11
The Towns Assets And Strengths	12
Spatial Context	13
Stakeholder Engagement	14
Theory of Change	16
suggested Projects	19
Appendix 1 – Strategic Context Summary	31
Appendix 2 – Project Prioritisation	32

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Market Town Investment Plans

This Ledbury Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans (MTIPs) commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Ledbury, play a critical role in the county's economy, as focal points for employment; for retail, tourism, leisure and culture; for business investment and growth; for housing; and for access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The MTIPs will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

## The Vision for Ledbury

"As a prosperous market town, Ledbury will continue to be a vibrant, thriving community, both socially and economically, with an attractive, well managed and safe built environment in sympathy with the surrounding natural landscape.

The town will continue to be a popular destination as an attractive place to shop for residents, the local rural community and visitors, with a successful tourist industry celebrating the town's heritage."

## The Main Challenges facing the town

Ledbury has a population of 10,054 with a high proportion of over 65s (29% compared to the national average of 20%<sup>1</sup>). The town is less deprived than the England average on all measures apart from 'Barriers to Services' which measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services.

Ledbury has a larger proportion of higher value properties than the national average. New housing development has not yet been accompanied by any additional employment land and other infrastructure necessary to promote a sustainable community. Currently the Town Council is reviewing its Neighbourhood Development Plan which aims to address the imbalance in development requirements.

Ledbury has a smaller stock of jobs per head than the national average and saw an increase in benefit claimants between April and September 2020, the early part of the pandemic, from 185 to 220, a rise of 19%. Between 2015 and 2018 Ledbury saw a reduction of 625 jobs (14.5% of the total).

---

<sup>1</sup> ONS – Population Estimates for Lower Layer Super Output Areas in England and Wales by Broad Age Groups and Sex - National Statistics

## The Town's Assets and Strengths

Ledbury acts as a key service centre to the surrounding rural area, east Herefordshire and neighbouring Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. Ledbury railway station has regular services to Hereford, Malvern, Worcester, Birmingham and London. Ledbury has a strong voluntary sector with over 120 local groups. It has a number of visitor attractions and hosts a number of events throughout the year.

The town centre is covered by a Conservation Area, with many important built, historic and heritage assets, some of which are listed. The town sits on the fringes of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 highlights the town fringing its boundary and as one of its special features.

Ledbury has a thriving light industrial base, with companies such as Amcor, Galebreaker, Ornuo, Helping Hand, ABE, Heineken and Bevisol; and is well served by growers and producers supplying major supermarkets.

## Issues in Ledbury

Issues in Ledbury	Targets
Employment land demand Enhancement of skills base and development of economic potential Limited options for skills development in Ledbury Scope for the development of innovation and micro-businesses	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Enhance local recreational needs to meet current and projected need and demand Enhance operational functionality of the town No significant student presence in Ledbury	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer
Scope to enhance the civic architecture and townscape and increase the Town Market and other attractions including festivals Scope to enhance the civic architecture and townscape Weak visitor economy	Ledbury becomes a more livable place with a more effective high street within the next 5 years
Scope to enhance the civic architecture and townscape	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.

## Project summary

The MTIP identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town's vision. These include:

Development of employment opportunities:

- Viaduct site – 3 Ha employment allocation - business units
- Employment Land at Little Marcle Road

Improvements to develop a more sustainable and fully functioning town:

- Rail parking and access
- Landscaping at Master House/St Katherines Car Park leading to the High Street
- Shop Front Grant Scheme

Civic amenities and projects aimed at young people

- Conversion of Town Council offices to Tourist destination
- Relocation of Playing Fields
- Viaduct site – Student accommodation

The MTIP shows how each of these projects contribute to the delivery of Ledbury's Vision. It will provide a platform for successful funding bids as suitable funding opportunities become available.

Herefordshire Council will continue to work with Ledbury Town Council and other local stakeholders to identify new project and funding opportunities, carry out feasibility and foundation work, and support local organisations to apply for funding.

## BACKGROUND

This Ledbury Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire’s market towns, including Ledbury, play a critical role in the county’s economy, as focal points for employment; retail, tourism, leisure and culture; business investment and growth; housing; and access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

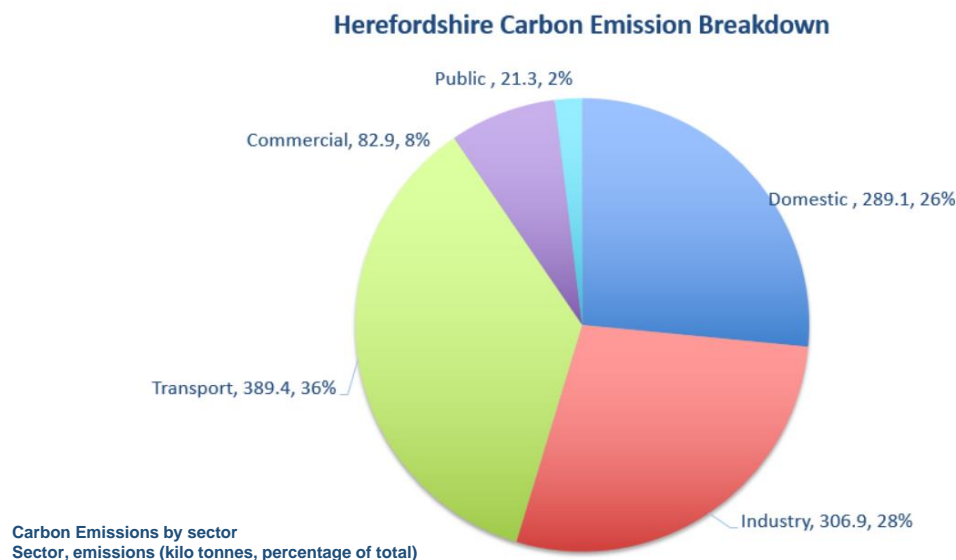
The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide ‘big plan’. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county, how we retain/ attract younger generations, in creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

### Climate and Ecological Emergency

On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council. This declaration was subsequently updated and strengthened on 11 December 2020 when Herefordshire Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) following support for a climate and ecological emergency resolution at full council.

Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

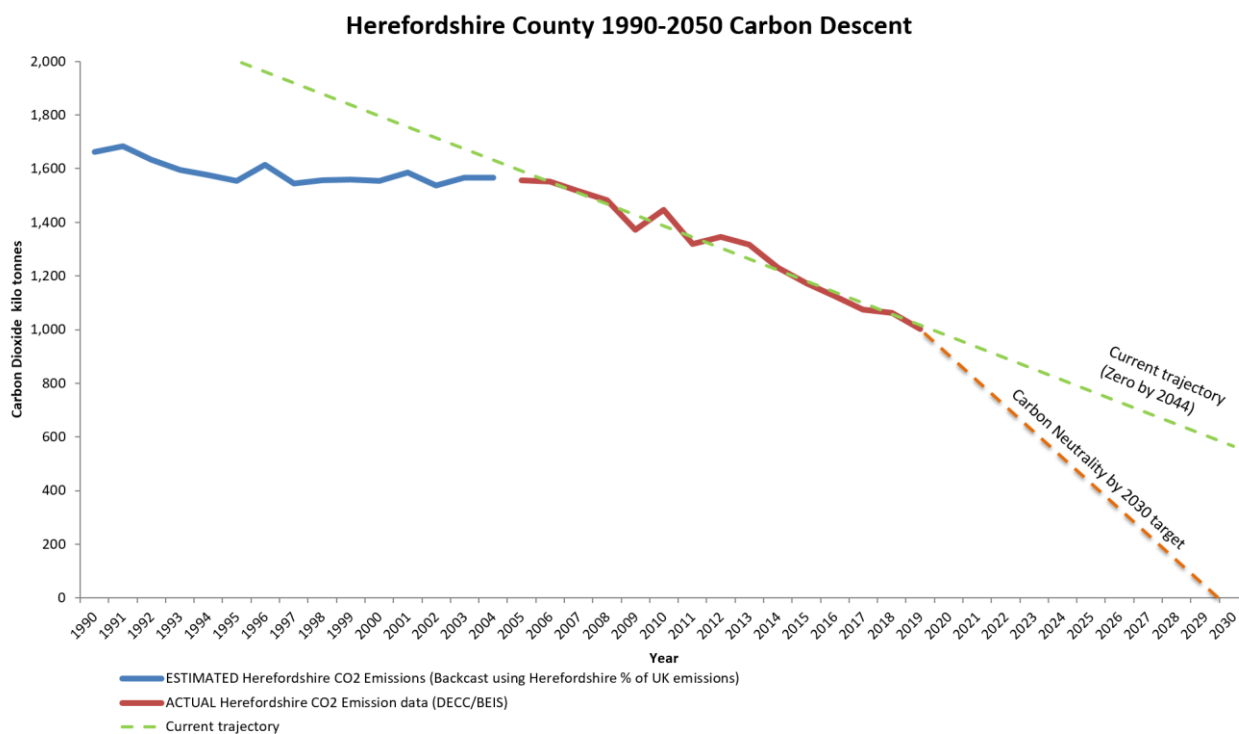
The below chart illustrates Herefordshire’s current carbon emission split and the areas of focus for the Ledbury MTIP to support the Herefordshire’s journey to net zero.



In order to achieve this target, as illustrated below, a new Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership and Board have been established to catalyse and coordinate new action across the

County. These actions have been grouped into a series of six different action plans including: Housing & Buildings; Transport; Energy; Farming & Land Use; Waste and Food.

The details of the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership, including the six themed action plans are set out: <https://zerocarbon.herefordshire.gov.uk/>



As a key strategic plan the Ledbury MTIP is strongly committed to delivering Herefordshire’s net zero and nature rich commitment and will work in partnership with its communities, businesses and the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Board to achieve this through the development and delivery of the plan.

### Community Including the Impact of Covid-19

The damage to the economy and to health from Covid-19 has been felt across Herefordshire. During 2020 and the early part of 2021, the pandemic reached all corners of the county and has had an impact on every community. During 2020, the UK economy contracted by 9.9%. It remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be, but within many sectors we are likely to see a shift to working, learning and engaging in commerce remotely on digital platforms.

The projects proposed in this Plan have been developed through engagement with key stakeholders in Ledbury and will help the town to attract essential investment as the need to promote recovery opens up new funding opportunities.

Attitudes towards working from home have changed substantially since the start of the COVID pandemic and many workers will continue to work from home long after it has ended.

There could be positive implications for Herefordshire’s Market Towns in what is being termed ‘hybrid working’. The Centre for Towns recently reported that its research indicates “big potential for places to market themselves as online working destinations” as predictions indicate that the longer people are required to work at home, the greater the adoption of home working will be beyond the current situation.

The best performing towns are ones with a healthy mix of age groups and professional types. An increase in home working would have a significant positive impact in rebalancing Herefordshire's market towns demographics and towns should therefore actively promote themselves to attract in and retain a thriving working age population.

Towns will need to work closely with Herefordshire Council to ensure that digital connectivity is adequate to support the needs of home workers. Clearly Herefordshire market towns have a significant 'quality of life' offer, with a good range of local services.

## Economy

Herefordshire faces a number long term economic challenges such as the lowest level of productivity of any county in England<sup>2</sup>, a low wage economy (19% below the national average<sup>3</sup>), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%<sup>4</sup>), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits<sup>5</sup>).

However, the county has a significant number of opportunities, including local strengths in food and drink, tourism, and agriculture, specialisms in fast growing global markets like cyber security, an outstanding quality of life, and new university (New Model Institute in Technology and Engineering). The county is also very well placed to benefit from a post Covid lifestyle trend, as people now look to increasingly work remotely away from populated cities to locations offering a better quality of life.

The market towns have a crucial role to play in addressing the long term economic challenges, and realising the county's many opportunities. Key local centres for housing, culture, access to public services, tourism, with strong local communities and identities. Establishing great vibrant places to live and meaningful employment opportunities will be key to stemming the aging population, in retaining/ attracting younger generations to study, live and work in the county for generations to come.

Ledbury is particularly well placed to realise some of these opportunities, significantly contributing the future economic success of the county as a whole. A highly attractive and popular market town, strategically well placed on the road network (close to the M50), offering a great place to live, visit and work.

As people's approach to work and quality of life requirements change, Ledbury is well placed to benefit from an increasing transition to a digital economy, with people working from home or flexible workspaces in attractive, less densely populated locations away from city centres.

The Plan identifies a vision for growth and a programme of investment projects required to deliver the vision and support the economic development of Ledbury over the next fifteen years. Funding from many different sources will be needed to achieve them. The Plan identifies the timetable for delivery, lead body and potential sources of investment for each of the projects.

---

<sup>2</sup> [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)

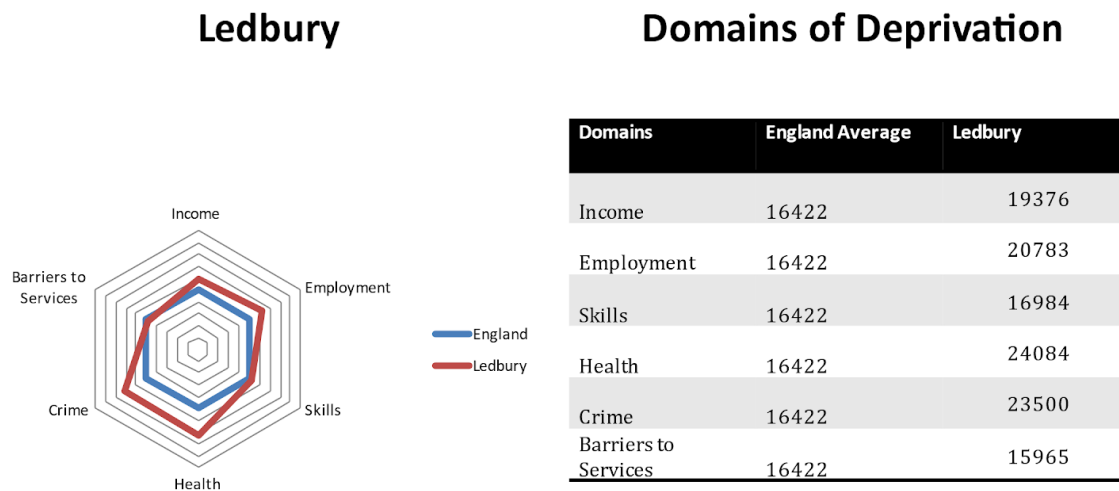
## THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

A full review of all extant documents produced in the last five years relating to Ledbury’s economic and community development is attached at Appendix 1. This contextual analysis has informed the selection and prioritisation of investment proposals in the Town Investment Plan.

A review of the 2019 Indices of deprivation identifies the main challenges facing the town summarised as follows:

- Ledbury is less deprived than England on all measures apart from Barriers to Services
- Ledbury has a similar population to other market towns apart from Kington. Population just over 10,000. 9% more over 65s than the national average.
- There is a smaller stock of jobs per head than the national average.
- Ledbury has seen an Increase in benefit claimants by 19%
- Ledbury experienced a loss of 625 jobs between 2015-18.
- Distinctive sectors for Ledbury include: manufacturing, wholesale/retail, transport, accommodation and food, professional services, arts and entertainment.
- Ledbury has a higher proportion of higher value properties than the national average.

## English Indices of Deprivation 2019



The radar diagram ranks all 32,844 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England according to the indices of deprivation. Each LSOA has a population of circa 1,500 people or 650 households.

- The blue line indicates the England average;
- Within the blue line is more deprived;
- Outside the blue line is less deprived.



The radar diagram above is derived from the English Indices of Deprivation 2019. It ranks each neighbourhood in England in terms of their characteristics in relation to the following indicator sets:

- The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
- The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
- The Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- The Crime Domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.

Pressure for new houses has resulted in extensions to the town in a number of directions. These are predominantly to its north, beyond the viaduct, and to the south, crossing over Ledbury bypass.

As yet this growth has not been accompanied by any additional employment land and other infrastructure which is considered necessary to promote a sustainable community. Currently the Town Council is reviewing its Neighbourhood Development Plan which aims to address the imbalance in development requirements.

## THE VISION FOR LEDBURY

As a prosperous market town, Ledbury will continue to be a vibrant, thriving community, both socially and economically, with an attractive, well managed and safe built environment in sympathy with the surrounding natural landscape.

The town will continue to be a popular destination as an attractive place to shop for residents, the local rural community and visitors, with a successful tourist industry celebrating the town's heritage.

### Objectives

This Vision helped shape the Objectives which are grouped under 6 headings:

- Housing
- Employment and Economy
- Built Environment
- Natural Environment
- Community and Leisure
- Transport and Infrastructure

## THE TOWNS ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

We have set out below the key assets and strengths of the town

- Ledbury acts as a key service centre to the surrounding rural area, East Herefordshire and neighbouring Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.
- The town centre is covered by a Conservation Area, with many important built, historic and heritage assets, some of which are listed.
- Ledbury has a thriving light industrial base, with companies such as Amcor, Galebreaker, Ornuu, Helping Hand, ABE, Heineken and Bevisol; and is well served by growers and producers supplying major supermarkets.
- Ledbury is the gateway to Herefordshire and the Welsh Marches and sits on the fringes of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Ledbury itself has a number of visitor attractions and hosts a number of events throughout the year.
- Ledbury has a railway station with regular services to Hereford, Malvern, Worcester, Birmingham and London – with improvements to access and car parking required.
- Ledbury also has a town trail (part of a former railway branch line), canal and riverside walk, and forms part of the Herefordshire Trail and Geo Park Way.
- The Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2019-2024 highlights the market town of Ledbury as fringing its boundary and as one of its special features.
- Ledbury has a strong voluntary sector with over 120 local groups.

The Ledbury policy context summary:

1. Ledbury is a thriving market town and acts as a key service centre to the surrounding rural area, East Herefordshire and neighbouring Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.
2. The town centre is covered by a Conservation Area, with many important built, historic and heritage assets, some of which are listed.
3. The town is scheduled to accommodate growth – mainly within an urban extension to the North. The Local Plan and LNDP seek to balance new developments with the environmental and historic constraints of the town – extending sustainable transport routes (including rail, bus, cycle and pedestrian access), affordability (housing, jobs), and through the provision of new community infrastructure. This also includes the creation of new, accessible green space, outdoor play and sports facilities.
4. Ledbury has a thriving light industrial base, with companies such as Amcor, Galebreaker, Ornu, Helping Hand, ABE, Heineken and Bevisol; and is well served by growers and producers supplying major supermarkets. Proposals seek to provide employment land to the West – upgrade existing business sites and develop brownfield sites.
5. Ledbury is the gateway to Herefordshire and the Welsh Marches and sits on the fringes of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Ledbury itself has a number of visitor attractions and hosts a number of events throughout the year. There are opportunities to increase local hotel and visitor accommodation provision, enhance visitor infrastructure and undertake cross-boundary promotion with other areas to turn days into stays.
6. Infrastructure (transport, broadband connectivity, community facilities) is needed to support this growth – including reducing dependency on the private car. Ledbury has a railway station with regular services to Hereford, Malvern, Worcester, Birmingham and London – with some improvements to access and car parking required.

## SPATIAL CONTEXT

Herefordshire's Core Strategy contains a chapter on Place Shaping. For Ledbury this sets out area policies and proposals to support the town to fulfil its role as a 'thriving service centre to its surrounding rural area in the east of the county'.

The focus is on meeting housing needs (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel by private car, facilitating the provision of new jobs to stem out-commuting, improving the delivery of, and access to, services, and realising the value of the local environment by promoting sustainable tourism and high quality housing.

- Developing Ledbury as a forward thinking, self-reliant and sustainable lifestyle community to reflect increasing climate change challenges. For example, through self-build zero carbon based housing developments, growing its own food, generating renewable energy and recycling waste and water.

- To ensure that new housing in Ledbury meets the needs of residents and is developed in a sustainable manner. To meet the target set out in the Core Strategy Herefordshire Council allocated 625 dwellings on the north of the town on what is known as the viaduct site. Windfall provision and approved planning applications have brought forward approximately 200 dwellings and the approval of 321 dwellings following an appeal means the total will exceed the target. The Ledbury NDP seeks to address what is a traditional low income area but with high cost housing due its suitability for commuting to the Midlands and beyond.
- Delivering a mix of sustainable employment sites to cater for future growth – the priority here is on high-quality, long-term employment, business start-ups and creative industries.
- Ledbury has a number of visitor attractions within the town and nearby and hosts a number of events throughout the year. The Ledbury NDP encourages proposals that increase local hotel and visitor accommodation provision in the urban area, and outside of the urban area the re-use of existing buildings into self-catering tourism units. It references the need for a new hotel which would provide employment opportunities, but also the need to provide better visitor infrastructure.
- Promoting a choice of retail, leisure and community activities in ways that enhance the appearance and historic character of the town. Ledbury has a range of independent shops, food outlets, services and pubs as well as a number of specialist shops which attract visitors from further afield and have also created online businesses.
- Offering a good standard of facilities, services and open spaces. This includes supporting health facilities to expand, new or improved community facilities for young people, facilities for people with mobility impairment, and supporting the establishment of a tri-service emergency centre.
- Reducing vehicular dependency through promoting the use of cycling, walking, and public transport including the use of train services for work, business and leisure needs. This includes improvements to the town trail and improvements to the accessibility and facilities at the railway station.
- The Management Plan highlights the need for cross-boundary promotion with Malvern and Ledbury as part of attempts to build quality experiences that turn days into stays.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Following the stakeholder Zoom meeting in December there was a further meeting with the Town Council lead stakeholder to discuss the outcomes and the next steps. The minutes of the stakeholder meeting were circulated to all those attending.

Engagement with stakeholders reflects the short-list of projects agreed with the Town Council which are: land next to the Heineken Site as potential employment land; rail access with car parking and small business units on land to the east of the rail station; landscaping of part of St Katherine's car park next to the Master's House; relocation of the Town Council to enable the historic building to be re-purposed for tourism and revenue generating activities.

Several one to one engagement meetings have been held with Heineken, with 2 meetings including council officers, and a further meeting including the NDP development team.

2 stakeholder Zoom meetings were held with members of the Ledbury Sports/Football clubs in respect of a potential new site adjacent to the potential employment site at Little Marcle Road (Heineken) as part of the NDP development with which the MTIP work is closely aligned.

We have held a significant number of phone calls and virtual meetings with project leads and a range of service areas within Herefordshire Council to discuss the potential for transfer of funds and responsibilities for the landscaping of St Katherine's car park as well as for the potential for the Town Council to take space at the Masters House.

Further stakeholder engagement with the landowner, Herefordshire Sustainable Transport Group and Herefordshire Council officers in respect of car parking at the rail station has taken place between January and the end of March and is on-going.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change linked to the projects proposed arising from the strategy is set out below

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Ledbury	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Employment Land at Little Marcle Road	Business/Economy	Employment land demand	Acquire and encourage the development of new employment land	New serviced employment land	Increased stock of land to meet local employment demand	More sustainable settlement on a live/work basis	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Relocation of Playing fields	Town/Civic Amenities	Enhance local recreational needs to meet current and projected need and demand	Acquire new playing field site	Better recreational and leisure environment	Increased residential desirability. Increased sport participation and volunteering	More attractive settlement to people wishing to live/work in Ledbury	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer
Rail parking and access	Town/Civic Amenities Business/Economy	Enhance operational functionality of the town	Develop key railway station infrastructure	Better and more accessible rail and parking options	Better communications and commercial infrastructure	More accessible and sustainable location for employment/leisure	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Ledbury	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Landscaping at Masters House/St Katherines	Town/Civic Amenities	Scope to enhance the civic architecture and townscape and increase the Town Market and other attractions including festivals	Invest in the development of this element of public realm	More attractive public environment, better use of civic buildings and public space	Better performing physical estate in Ledbury, support for local producers through expanded market and a contribution to the wider county wide tourism offer.	More effective use of public assets, increased visitor numbers through expanded Market and other activities – festivals etc.	Ledbury becomes a more livable place with a more effective high street within the next 5 years
Skills Development	Business/Economy	Enhancement of skills base and development of economic potential	Create a skills hub linked to key training providers with a focus in Hereford	A more skilled pool of workforce choices for employers and potential inward investors	A more productive and skilled town	Ledbury is more able to sustain its development as an economic entity	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Canal restoration link to skills – training facility	Business/Economy	Limited options for skills development in Ledbury	Create a skills hub linked to key training providers with a focus in Hereford	Enhanced canal facilities more local people trained	A more productive and skilled town	Ledbury is more able to sustain its development as an economic entity	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Conversion of Town Council offices to Tourist destination	Tourism/Visitors	Scope to enhance the civic architecture and townscape	Conversion of key strategic tourism asset	More attractive public environment, better use of civic buildings	Better performing physical estate in Ledbury	More effective use of public assets	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.
Viaduct site – Student accommodation	Business/Economy	No significant student presence in Ledbury	Holistic investment in the civic, and employment infrastructure	Creation of student accommodation in town centre	Attraction of skilled and learning based	A town with a richer mix of people of all skills and potential	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Ledbury	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
			make Ledbury a more balanced place in terms of its demography. Making Ledbury attractive for economically active incomers.		residents to Ledbury		opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer – discernable change in 5 years
Viaduct site – 3ha employment allocation – Incubator/start-up units link to NMite	Business/Economy	Scope for the development of innovation and micro-businesses	Create a skills hub linked to key training providers with a focus in Hereford	Development of incubation services for micro-enterprise in Ledbury	Creation of a new cadre of micro-enterprises	Ledbury benefits from access to HE know how and dynamism	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Shop/building frontage grant scheme	Tourism/Visitors Town /Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Development of a scheme to bring forward private sector investment in key High Street properties	Improved Built environment in the Town	More footfall and private investment	More demand to visit and invest in the town	Ledbury becomes a more livable place with a more effective high street within the next 5 years



## SUGGESTED PROJECTS

The following projects and ‘investment themes’ emerged through the stakeholder engagement process. These projects and themes were validated through a wider stakeholder meeting in late December 2020 and subsequent group and one to one discussions in the first quarter of 2021.

The tables below provide a short form summary by way of an overview of projects and themes, those projects that could be considered appropriate for Herefordshire Employment Land and Incubation Space Capital Programme funding (amongst other sources), and individual descriptions of those projects that are considered strategically significant, with the potential to attract funding outside of the Council. It is supported by a theory of change, showing aspirations for impact.

The package of projects identified in this Town Investment Plan will need to access a range of funding sources in order to be delivered.

The majority of the projects identified will need to explore alternative funding options which could include: private investment including Section 106 funding; Heritage Lottery; charitable trusts; other public sector funding such as the capital programmes of the West Mercia Police Service; the Hereford and Worcester Fire service; the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group; the Marches LEP; Homes England etc.

In addition to these sources of funding there are a range of Government funding opportunities already in place and more will be announced going forward. Some of the projects in the Plan will require revenue funding as well as capital investment. There may be opportunities to package projects together to bid for funding as well as to bid for funds in phases on the larger projects. Different funders will require different information and governance arrangements which will need to be considered on a bid by bid basis. The evidence base and supporting information produced to support this Plan will be a useful information and policy context to help inform bids for funding.

In May 2021 the Town Council and wider stakeholders met to consider the relative priority to allocate to each project. A scoring matrix based on the good practice methodology identified by the Town Hub which supports the national implementation of the Town Fund was used to assess the relative merit of each project. Within the matrix there are 8 themes identified through and validated by engagement with local stakeholders.

For Ledbury the key criteria agreed were: contribution to net zero; attraction of more visitors/inward investment; increased GVA (a measure of the productivity of businesses); increased business diversity (an increase to the range and variety of businesses operating locally); higher skills; better population balance (supporting a wide demographic spread of age groups); greater equity (supporting fairer access to all determinants of quality of life) and equality agenda (eliminating any form of discrimination). Each project was scored by the group on a scale of 1-5 where one is lowest to provide a group composite score. These scores then used to rank the project as set out in the summary table at Appendix 2.

Project	Summary
Viaduct site – 3ha employment allocation - business units	Potential for high tech business units to provide incubator space that NMITE and spin-out businesses would be looking for.
Employment Land at Little Marcle Road	<p>The opportunity to open up 6.7 acres of existing brownfield land for employment use. The site is currently part of the Heineken works that has been identified as surplus to operational requirements. Heineken has expressed interest in disposal of this area of land as it seeks to consolidate and increase the efficiency of its Ledbury site.</p> <p>This project could include options for site acquisition to accelerate delivery and influence eventual end-use of the site including green energy options.</p> <p>To note also that Heineken is offering 19 acres of greenfield land adjacent to its Ledbury site to the market for commercial development. This land is identified in the Ledbury NDP as employment land.</p> <p>Provisional Cost - £6,800,000</p>
Rail parking and access	<p>This project addresses the need for additional car parking at Ledbury Station as well as opening up pedestrian access (including disabled access) to the East bound platform. The car parking element has clear revenue potential. The potential to include small business units and a local farm shop equally present revenue options for the scheme.</p> <p>Provisional Cost £2.5 million</p>
Landscaping at Master House/St Katherines Car Park leading to the High Street	<p>Existing plans to landscape the area to the front of the building including part of the adjoining St Katherine's car park have not been realised notwithstanding the availability of funding for that purpose. Transfer of the asset to the Town Council would enable more 'creative' and flexible procurement to deliver the landscaping 'project' within the existing budget allocation. The finished public space could be transferred as an asset to the council to enhance the council's space for holding markets and events in the heart of the town. Provisional Cost - £120,000</p>
Shop Front Grant Scheme	<p>Financial support to encourage businesses based in Ledbury to revitalise their shop front.</p> <p>Provisional Cost - £200,000</p>
Conversion of Town Council offices to Tourist destination	<p>This would involve relocation of the Town Council to the Masters House to allow repurposing of the existing building for holiday let and wider tourism/local facilities to generate revenue and add to the Towns Heritage Tourism offering. Provisional Cost - £500,000</p>
Relocation of Playing Fields	<p>Relocation of the playing fields including an up-grade of pitch type and facilities to support strong community involvement in sports – requires circa 5ha identified potentially on land adjacent to little Marcle employment site. Provisional Cost - £1,500,000</p>

Project	Summary
Viaduct site – Student accommodation	The development site opens up the possibility for the location of some student accommodation on the development with close access to the station.

The two projects below were not included in the main list of projects as whilst they are deemed of value there are concerns that they have some long term delivery challenges. They are also outlined in yellow to represent the challenges associated with them in the project prioritization table at Appendix 2

Canal restoration link to skills – training facility	Canal Trust and HCT led skills programme to include NMITE and a local skills/training access point for reskilling/through-life learning.
Skills Development	To support Ledbury’s viability as a thriving balanced economy, the town needs to develop integrated and forward-looking skills development capacity to support its residents and to attract inward investment. The Skills Foundry project, developed as a collaboration between NMITE, HCA and Rural Media as part of Hereford’s Stronger Towns Funding bid, aims to include Herefordshire’s market towns in a hub and spoke delivery model and will actively engage with Ledbury.

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Employment Land at Little Marcle Road (2.7 hectares brownfield site)					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p>Description - There is an imbalance between housing and employment with some 40% of the working population commuting out of the town. The Ledbury NDP identifies an area of circa 7.6 hectares owned by and contiguous to the Heineken facility as employment land.</p> <p>Through the Investment Plan project Heineken have been engaged and show willingness to dispose of this 7.6 hectares site to the market to bring forward commercial developments.</p> <p>This investment plan identifies an opportunity to open up 2.7 hectares (6.7 acres) of existing brownfield land for employment use. The site is currently part of the Heineken works that has been identified as surplus to their operational requirements. Heineken has expressed interest in disposal of this area of land as it seeks to consolidate and increase the efficiency of its Ledbury site. This investment plan considers this site to be less attractive to the market to bring forward given potential extraordinary costs associated with site remediation, and therefore provides a strong rationale for public sector intervention.</p> <p>In total both sites could deliver up to 12 hectares of employment land over the NDP period, equivalent to the total requirement identified for Ledbury.</p>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			£6,800,000	5 Years	<p>The opportunity to open up 2.7 hectares (6.7 acres) of existing brownfield land for employment use. The site is currently part of the Heineken works that has been identified as surplus to operational requirements. Heineken has expressed interest in disposal of this area of land as it seeks to consolidate and increase the efficiency of its Ledbury site.</p> <p>This project could include options for site acquisition and enabling works by Herefordshire Council to accelerate delivery and influence eventual end-use of the site including green energy options.</p>
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	The site is being promoted by the landowner and the project is broadly supported by the Town Council with strong local community backing.				
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	<p>Heineken (The landowner) has recently expressed an interest in disposal of the land and is demonstrating a willingness to engage in the Investment plan process as a 'community stakeholder' given its wider economic and corporate footprint in Herefordshire.</p> <p>We are currently facilitating discussion of options between Heineken and Herefordshire Council on options that could include site acquisition by the Council and enabling works to accelerate delivery and influence</p>				

Investment Proposal Form				
	eventual end-use of the site including green energy options.			
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	This project will raise capital receipts which over a phased time period will repay the investment proposed.			

Investment Proposal Form			
Project Name: Rail parking and access			
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>
<p>Description: This project addresses the need for additional car parking at Ledbury Station as well as opening up pedestrian access (including disabled access) to the East bound platform. Current parking facilities and pedestrian access are severely constrained, creating disruptive on-street parking and significantly restricting access to public transport. These constraints act as a major drag on delivering the wider economic and social connectivity benefits and advantages of this significant transport asset. Connectivity and access are central elements of the town's development aspirations to improve facilities for business creation and growth. The project may deliver a small number of business incubator units on the site identified, with the potential for a bus turning point that would significantly improve transport into and out of town. This latter is considered to be an important service to support the volume of additional housing within the town.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	The site is being promoted by the landowner and the project is broadly supported by the Town Council with strong local community backing. Core Strategy to be reviewed. Transport for Wales approval. Neighbourhood Development Plan.	£ TBC	Dependent on core strategy review
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	The car parking element has clear revenue potential. The potential to include small business units and a local farm shop equally present revenue options for the scheme that could form the basis for debt financing and other sources of commercial finance.		
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	Further discussions with the rail operator and the development of a worked up scheme are required as a next step.		
		<i>Outputs</i>	Enhance operational functionality of the town. Better and more accessible rail and parking options. Better communications and commercial infrastructure. More accessible and sustainable location for employment/leisure.

Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Landscaping at Master House/St Katherines Car Park leading to the High Street				
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	
<i>Description (up to 100 words)</i>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
<p>This area of the Town centre is of significant historic and cultural interest as well as a gateway into the high street and surrounding areas. The recently refurbished Masters House is an impressive historic building owned by Herefordshire Council but with an extant agreement for an asset transfer to the Town Council. Existing plans to landscape the area to the front of the building including part of the adjoining St Katherine's car park have not been realised notwithstanding the availability of substantial funding for that purpose. and responsibility from Herefordshire Council to the Town Council would enable more 'creative' and flexible procurement by the Town Council to deliver the landscaping 'project' within the existing budget allocation with then the potential to make the case for the finished public space to be transferred as an asset to the council to enhance the council's space for holding markets and events in the heart of the town.</p>				
Demand Analysis	This is a long-standing delivery aspiration by the Town Council. It has significant local support for the visual improvements delivered and the potential to extend the town market.	£100,000	6 months to 12 months	Scope to enhance the civic architecture and townscape. More attractive public environment, better use of civic buildings. Better performing physical estate in Ledbury. More effective use of public assets
Potential funding sources	Existing section 106 monies available to be transferred for delivery – a design has been completed and would require some modifications to allow tendering for a scheme to deliver within budget.			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Delivery and on-going maintenance undertaken by Town Council following asset transfer of the Land. Project Management capabilities would be 'bought in' by the Town Council from Herefordshire Council.			

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Relocation and up-grading of sports pitches					
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description:</i> Relocation of the playing fields including an up-grade of pitch type and facilities to support strong community involvement in sports – requires circa 5ha identified potentially on land adjacent to little Marcle employment site.</p> <p>A December 2020 report from the DCMS on the Economic Value of Sport puts sport at a 5.7% contribution to the DCMS total. Sport contributed £17.0bn in 2019, accounting for 0.9% of UK GVA. The GVA of Sport has increased by 2.9% between 2018 and 2019 and by 20.4% between 2010 and 2019, in real terms. Local sport creates significant direct value and substantial additional GVA through the range of volunteering activities that it encourages.</p>			Cost	Timescale	Outputs
Demand Analysis	<p>Pressure from additional housing adds to the shortfall of land for playing fields. The NDP highlights the land shortage relative to population size. Existing Full Pitcher site was granted planning permission for 100 houses and requires the relocation of the football club. The Town has a very active football community at all ages and stages with significant participation and volunteer contributions all of which is set to increase in line with new housing. Current estimates from the local Ledbury Football Club that 20% of the Town are involved in the club and related activities.</p>		£1.5M	12 to 18 months	All weather pitches providing year round facilities to support and increase participation.
Potential funding sources	<p>Recent consultation with Herefordshire Council identified S106 funding that is available for sport and recreation. The Football club is also exploring funding via relevant sporting bodies.</p>				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	<p>The project needs clearer definition in terms of land requirement – and the nature of land acquisition whether via purchase, land swap, or other ‘planning gain’ type approach with local landowners. Discussion in the context of the potential for employment land at Little Marcle Road with scope for adjacent land for the sports fields is on-going and requires further in-put and co-ordination via Herefordshire Council and Ledbury Town Council.</p>				



Investment Proposal Form			
Project Name: Conversion of Town Council offices to Tourist destination			
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>
<p><i>Description:</i> This would involve relocation of the Town Council to the Masters House to allow repurposing of the existing building for holiday let and wider tourism/local facilities to generate revenue and add to the Towns Heritage Tourism offering.</p> <p>The relocation of the Town Council could be effected through space provision within the Masters House leased from Herefordshire Council.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
<p><i>Demand Analysis</i></p> <p>Similar repurposing of historic buildings for revenue generating activities is commonplace across the UK and provides the basis for self-funding. There is a shortage of holiday accommodation in Ledbury and this would add to the general offer and also encourage longer stays. Additional uses for inter alia conferences and weddings would broaden the commercial offer.</p>		£500k	18 months
<p><i>Potential funding sources</i></p> <p>As a heritage asset the project would be eligible for related funding including the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic England. A full business plan would demonstrate the potential for borrowing/debt finance against which the Town Council could consider borrowing options if appropriate.</p>			
<p><i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i></p> <p>The project would become financially self-sustaining with any surpluses generated available for additional developments if required. £1 of Public sector investment in heritage-led regeneration generates £1.60 in additional economic activity over 10 years – a 60% ROI.</p>			
		<i>Outputs</i>	
		Enhanced public realm. High profile visitor attraction to encourage longer stays and encourage additional footfall into the town.	

## Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Ledbury Viaduct Site – Student Accommodation

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
<p><i>Description:</i> Bloor Homes plans to build 625 homes and 2.9 hectares of B1 employment space in Ledbury, as a mixed-use site next to Ledbury Viaduct and Orchard Business Park. This project ‘concept’ would link the town to the newly established NMITE at Hereford by providing student accommodation on that site over time as the University is established and demand for student accommodation increases, that would encourage enterprise amongst graduates as well as providing business demand for the higher skills acquired by graduates at the University.</p> <p>Project options could include the acquisition of land and development of accommodation by Herefordshire Council to support this wider aspiration in the event that it was established that the market was unable to deliver such facilities.</p>					
Demand Analysis	Additional feasibility work is required to determine project demand and viability and appropriateness for Council Capital funding.		£TBC	12-18 months	Influx of younger undergraduates to the town with the opportunity over time to ‘incubate’ enterprising start-up businesses and attract inward investment in small high tech business start-up that requires skilled engineers.
Potential funding sources	Delivery options would need to be developed to determine the potential for private sector or public sector investment, or a combination, including the NMITE funding at the appropriate stage.				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Consideration would need to be given to the nature of any Council Capital Investment for either long-term revenue generation from rental income, or a shorter term ‘loan’ basis for repayment post development.				

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Ledbury Viaduct Site – 2.9 ha employment land allocation potential for business units					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description:</i> Bloor Homes plans to build 625 homes and will plan to build 2.9 hectares of B1 employment space in Ledbury, on a site next to Ledbury Viaduct and Orchard Business Park. This project ‘concept’ would support the development and early delivery of a range of business units for lease to support new business start up and expansion to meet the requirements for additional employment space in the Town. Ledbury is currently under supplied with the type and range of business premises to enable local business start-ups and expansion according to the views expressed at the planning meetings for this initiative, from the local area which acts as a significant drag to its economic performance and exacerbates the Town’s currently skewed demographic by not providing employment opportunities for the economically active. Project options could include the acquisition of land and development of business units by Herefordshire Council to support this strategic requirement for the town. Whilst the developer has included this site within its planning application there remains a risk to delivery that could be mitigated through intervention by the Council to accelerate delivery.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	
		<p><b>Demand Analysis</b></p> <p>Additional feasibility work is required to determine project demand and viability and appropriateness for Council Employment Land and Business Space Capital Programme funding.</p>	<p><b>Potential funding sources</b></p> <p>Delivery options would need to be developed to determine the potential for private sector or public sector investment, or a combination, including developer participation or contribution.</p>	<p><b>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</b></p> <p>Consideration would need to be given to the nature of any Council Employment Land and Business Space Capital Programme Investment for either long-term revenue generation from rental income, or a shorter term ‘loan’ basis for repayment post development.</p>	<p>£TBC</p>

## Next Steps

This is one of five Market Town Economic Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council for each of Herefordshire's market towns.

Herefordshire Council has identified a number of projects which could be funded by them. As a result in addition to this Market Town Investment Plan, Rose Regeneration has completed Outline Business Cases (OBCs) and Project Mandates for the following projects for the Council's consideration.

OBCs have been developed and submitted for:

- Employment Land at Little Marcle Road – 2.7 hectare brownfield site at Heineken
- Rail Parking at Land adjacent to Ledbury Rail Station

Project Mandates have been developed and submitted for:

- Viaduct Site – 3 Ha employment land
- Viaduct site – Student Accommodation
- Ledbury Town Council Offices conversion for Tourism Use

Once the Plans, OBCs and Project Mandates have been considered by Herefordshire Council it is recommended that the Council works with the five market town councils to establish an appropriate delivery mechanism to oversee, secure funding for and monitor the delivery of the Market Town Economic Investment Plans. This delivery mechanism should be led and supported by Herefordshire Council and should involve representatives from each Town Council.

# APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

National context	Regional Context	Herefordshire Context	Ledbury Context
<p>Industrial Strategy – ‘places’ foundation: tackling entrenched regional disparities.</p> <p>Industrial Strategy Productivity Evidence Review – some cities and rural county areas have been falling behind, including Herefordshire. County Councils Network analysis of GVA in 36 county areas found Herefordshire to be experiencing the smallest economic growth 5.3% between 2014 and 2018).</p> <p>A low carbon future in a changing climate – UK obligations under the 2015 Paris Agreement - setting a net zero target for carbon emissions by 2050.</p> <p>HM Treasury/Government department resources - levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people.</p> <p>Build Better, Build Greener, Build Faster - reforming the planning system (NPPF, Planning for the Future White Paper) to give more emphasis to quality, design and the environment.</p> <p>COVID-19 recovery measures - protecting and restoring livelihoods, improving living standards and new economic opportunities.</p>	<p>Local Industrial Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan – inclusive growth, connectivity, skills, enterprise and innovation, trade and investment. Herefordshire’s sectoral specialisms: food and drink, education, advanced manufacturing and engineering, defence and construction. Growth opportunities for (i) manufacturing and engineering, (ii) food supply chain/agri-tech innovation, and (iii) cyber security and resilience.</p> <p>Skills Plan and Skills Sectors Deep Dives – the provision of Higher Education provision and Further Education courses relevant to these growth opportunities in Herefordshire.</p> <p>Cyber Resilience Alliance / Science and Innovation Audit – the largest cluster of cyber security activity outside of London: growth in direct jobs, wider investment in products and processes and acting as a regional testbed.</p> <p>Growth Hub and Enterprise Zone with specialisms in defence and security at Skylon Park, Hereford. Niche tourism offer with potential to increase awareness and visibility.</p> <p>Economic recovery plan – investment in infrastructure and jobs: Hereford city streetscape improvements and NMITE Skylon campus development.</p>	<p>Herefordshire is a cold spot for social mobility – it is in the bottom 20 list of Local Authorities in England in terms of the chances that disadvantaged children will do well at school and get a good job.</p> <p>The importance of creating high-quality, highly skilled jobs against a backdrop of traditional low-skill, low-wage economy.</p> <p>County Plan – improving sustainability, connectivity, wellbeing and becoming carbon neutral by 2030-2031: Talk Community (hubs), community wealth building (increasing the amount of money that stays in the local economy); and Sustainable Food County (a whole system approach to tackling obesity, diet related ill health, food poverty, waste and climate change).</p> <p>Hereford Town Investment Plan – intended to deliver urban regeneration, a stronger skills base, and improved connectivity in the city. Under the strapline ‘green and fair’ the TIP recognises Hereford’s connectivity to market towns and countryside (e.g. tourism – attract and disperse approach).</p> <p>Telling stories about place, identifying and implementing a vision, strong partnership working and securing funding/investment are all needed for pandemic Recovery and Transformation.</p> <p>Hereford Transport Strategy describes traffic flows, delays and congestion schemes which increase physical activity (e.g. cycling, walking) generate high value-for-money.</p>	<p>Ledbury is a principal market town, providing a service centre for the town, surrounding rural hinterland, East Herefordshire and neighbouring Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.</p> <p>Herefordshire Economic Vision – enabling market towns to maximise their role in building thriving and distinctive service centres.</p> <p>Herefordshire Core Strategy – Ledbury supporting housing need (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel by private car, employment generation to stem out-commuting, improving access to services, and viewing the environment as an economic asset through sustainable tourism.</p> <p>The vision for the town in the Neighbourhood Development Plan is structured around the following themes: preserve and develop prosperity, preserve and develop wellbeing, preserve quality and character, widen the employment base, develop educational facilities, develop sport and recreation, preserve the environment, and nurture the town centre = Ledbury as a forward thinking, self-reliant and sustainable lifestyle community.</p> <p>The market town is expected to accommodate growth – with new housing developments (x800 dwellings, mainly via an urban extension), employment land (15 hectares) and accompanying educational, health, transport, sports and community facilities.</p> <p>Ledbury is the gateway to Herefordshire and the Welsh Marches and sits on the fringes of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty = increasing local hotel and visitor accommodation, enhancing visitor infrastructure and cross-boundary promotion to turn days into stays.</p>

## APPENDIX 2 – PROJECT PRIORITISATION

PROJECTS	THEME	DESCRIPTION	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
Viaduct site – 3ha employment allocation - business units - Ledbury	Skills Investment	Potential for high tech business units to provide incubator space that NMITE and spin-out businesses would be looking for.	£1,000	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	93%
Employment Land at Little Marcle Road - Ledbury	Employment Space	The opportunity to open up 19 acres for employment use. The site is currently greenfield, identified in the draft NDP for employment use. The landowner has recently expressed interest in disposal of the land. This project could include options for site acquisition and enabling works by Herefordshire Council to accelerate delivery and influence eventual end-use of the site including green energy options.	£6,800	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	4	90%
Rail parking and access - Ledbury	Transport	This project addresses the need for additional car parking at Ledbury Station as well as opening up pedestrian access (including disabled access) to the East bound platform. The car parking element has clear revenue potential. The potential to include small business units and a local farm shop equally present revenue options for the scheme.	£2,500	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	88%
Landscaping at Master House/St Katherines Car Park leading to the High Street - Ledbury	Public Realm	Existing plans to landscape the area to the front of the building including part of the adjoining St Katherine's car park have not been realised notwithstanding the availability of funding for that purpose. Transfer of funding to the Town Council would enable more 'creative' and flexible procurement to deliver the landscaping 'project' within the existing budget allocation. The	£120	5	4	4	4	2	4	4	5	80%

PROJECTS	THEME	DESCRIPTION	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
		finished public space to be transferred as an asset to the council to enhance the council's space for holding markets and events in the heart of the town.										
Shop Front Grant Scheme - Ledbury	Commercial Development	Financial support to encourage businesses based in Ledbury to revitalise their shop front.	£200	5	4	4	4	2	3	4	5	78%
Conversion of Town Council offices to Tourist destination - Ledbury	Tourism	This would involve relocation of the Town Council to the Masters House to allow repurposing of the existing building for holiday let and wider tourism/local facilities to generate revenue and add to the Towns Heritage Tourism offering	£500	2	5	3	4	1	3	4	4	65%
Relocation of Playing fields - Ledbury	Community Space	Relocation of the playing fields including an up-grade of pitch type and facilities to support strong community involvement in sports – requires circa 5ha identified potentially on land adjacent to little Marcle employment site	£1,500	4	4	2	2	2	3	4	5	65%
Viaduct Student Accommodation	Housing	Potential for student accommodation with accessibility via Ledbury rail station to learning centres in Hereford	£3,500	4	3	0	4	0	4	5	4	60%
Skills Development - Ledbury, Leominster and Bromyard	Skills Investment	To support the town's viability as a thriving balanced economy, the town needs to develop integrated and forward-looking skills development capacity to support its residents and to attract inward investment. The Skills Foundry project, developed as a collaboration between NMITE, HCA and Rural Media as part of Hereford's Stronger Towns Funding bid, aims to include Herefordshire's market towns in a hub and spoke delivery model and will actively engage with Ledbury.	£500	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	90%

PROJECTS	THEME	DESCRIPTION	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
Canal restoration link to skills – training facility - Ledbury	Skills Investment	Canal Trust and HCT led skills programme to include NMITE and a local skills/training access point for reskilling/through-life learning.	£1,000	5	4	3	3	5	3	5	5	83%



# Bromyard Investment Plan 2021



JUNE 2021

*We're 90 minutes from Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff but a world away from the rat-race. Bromyard has something for everyone and we're open for business. Bromyard will build on its proud market town heritage to attract people to live, to work, to invest, to visit and to play. Our vision is rooted in our location in some of Britain's most beautiful countryside and in our ambitions to connect to the advanced industries and services in engineering, green technology, agri food, digital and circular economies which are emerging on our doorstep and to lead the way in artisan food and drink tourism. We will collaborate with our friends and neighbours to develop the lifelong skills of future generations, to create an ever-more vibrant and attractive visitor economy and to realise our full potential as a sustainable, cohesive and dynamic community*

Bromyard Town Investment Plan Statement 2021

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Background	6
Context	9
The Vision for Bromyard	9
The Main Challenges Facing the Town	10
The Town's Assets and Strengths	12
Spatial Context	12
Stakeholder Engagement	13
Theory of Change	14
Suggested Projects	16
Appendix 1 – Strategic Context Summary	23
Appendix 2 - Project Prioritisation	24
Appendix 3 Members of Bromyard TIP Steering Group	25

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Market Town Investment Plans

This Bromyard Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans (MTIPs) commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Bromyard, play a critical role in the county's economy, as focal points for employment; for retail, tourism, leisure and culture; for business investment and growth; for housing; and for access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The MTIPs will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

## The Vision for Bromyard

Key strategic objectives include making Bromyard:

- a place that encourages inward investment and new talent, with an excellent skills development offer, providing diverse career opportunities for our school and college leavers
- a place which is recognised regionally, nationally and globally for its artisan food and drink culture and experiential tourism offer, operates as a gateway for walking and cycling and has a national profile in terms of its festivals and events
- a place with a diverse and exciting retail offer a place which engages with and supports all parts of our community
- a more accessible place by improving our green transport connection links and active travel options

## The Main Challenges facing the town

Bromyard is one of the smallest market towns in the county with a population of 9,050 (2019 Mid-Year Population Estimates ONS), 4,700 in the town itself.

Bromyard is more deprived on most domains in the Indices of Deprivation than the England average with particular challenges around the skills profile of the town. Bromyard has 5% more over 65s than the England average of 20%. It has a modestly smaller stock of jobs per capita than the Herefordshire average and experienced an increase in Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA) claimants during the first half (April-October 2020) of the lockdown period, from 220 to 265, an increase of 20%.

## The Town's Assets and Strengths

Bromyard is well placed with transport and connectivity to South Wales, Birmingham and the Midlands. It has a strong festival and events calendar and the potential to act as a base for walking and cycling to develop its economic potential.

Bromyard has history and heritage buildings from the medieval, Georgian, Victorian, inter-war, post war and post millennium periods which are host to a high number of independent retailers. The town is a traditional small rural service centre supporting a wider dispersed population.

## Issues in Bromyard

Issues in Bromyard	Targets
Shortage of employment opportunities	Employment opportunities will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15
Low property values/weak independent retail/weak visitor economy	Visitor arrivals and expenditure will rise to the national average within 5 years
Weak visitor economy	
Lower than average skills and limited local training infrastructure	Local skills gap will close within 10 years to support new businesses and inward investment

## Project summary

The MTIP identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town's vision. These include:

Development of employment opportunities:

- EcoHub – development of new employment land

Improvements to support the visitor economy:

- Bromyard Eastern Enhancement – a range of proposals including a permanent festival site; community facilities; public realm improvements; and shop front grants scheme
- Greenway – phased development of a multi-user track from Bromyard to Rowden

Civic amenities, skills development and projects aimed at young people

- Health and Wellbeing Hub in the centre of Bromyard
- Skills Development – development of the Skills Foundry, a collaboration between NMITE, HCA and Rural Media as part of Hereford's Stronger Towns Funding bid, to include Bromyard in a hub and spoke delivery model

The MTIP shows how each of these projects contribute to the delivery of Bromyard's Vision. It will provide a platform for successful funding bids as suitable funding opportunities become available.

Herefordshire Council will continue to work with Bromyard and Winslow Town Council and other local stakeholders to identify new project and funding opportunities, carry out feasibility and foundation work, and support local organisations to apply for funding.

## BACKGROUND

This Bromyard Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire’s market towns, including Bromyard, play a critical role in the county’s economy, as focal points for employment; retail, tourism, leisure and culture; business investment and growth; housing; and access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

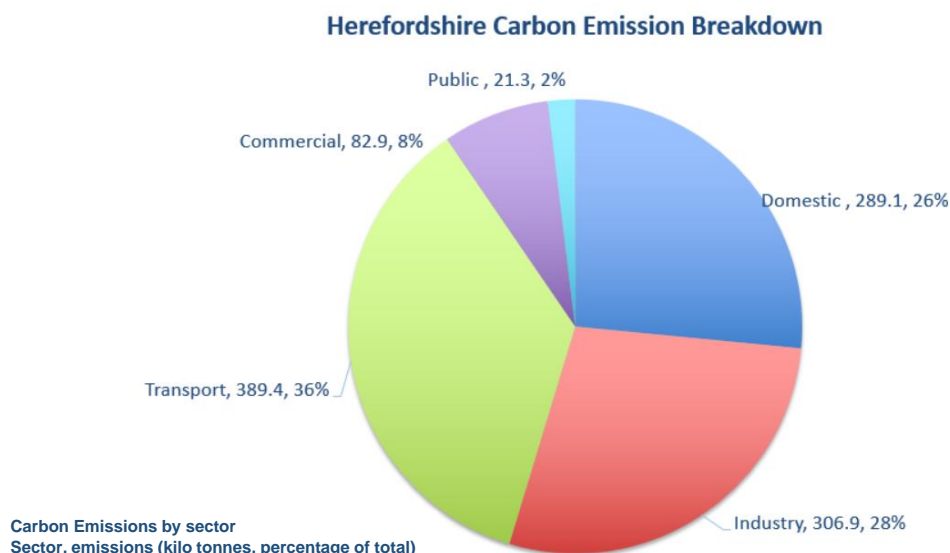
The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide ‘big plan’. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

### Climate and Ecological Emergency

On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council. This declaration was subsequently updated and strengthened on 11 December 2020 when Herefordshire Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) following support for a climate and ecological emergency resolution at full council.

Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

The below chart illustrates Herefordshire’s current carbon emission split and the areas of focus for the Bromyard MTIP to support the Herefordshire’s journey to net zero.

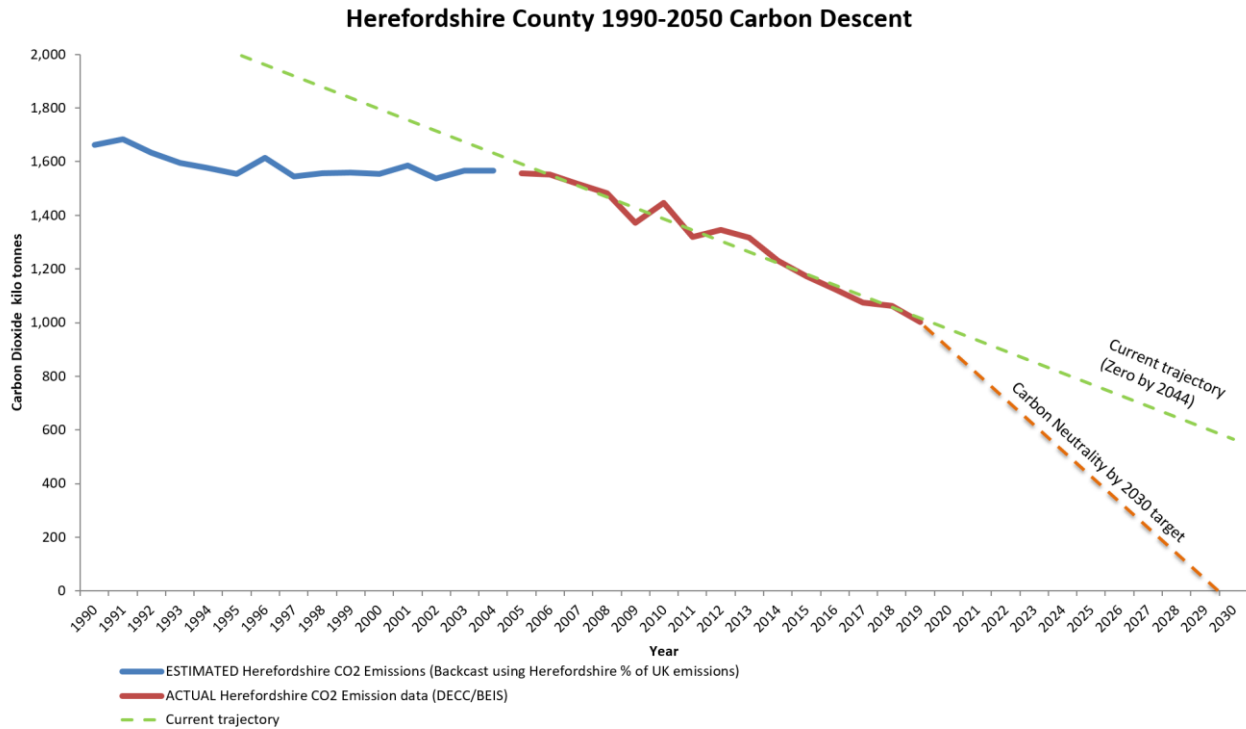


In order to achieve this target, as illustrated below, a new Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership and Board have been established to catalyse and coordinate new action across the



County. These actions have been grouped into a series of six different action plans including: Housing & Buildings; Transport; Energy; Farming & Land Use; Waste and Food.

The details of the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership, including the six themed action plans are set out: <https://zerocarbon.herefordshire.gov.uk/>



As a key strategic plan the Bromyard MTIP is strongly committed to delivering Herefordshire’s net zero and nature rich commitment and will work in partnership with its communities, businesses and the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Board to achieve this through the development and delivery of the plan.

## Economy

Herefordshire faces a number long term economic challenges such as the lowest level of productivity of any county in England<sup>1</sup>, a low wage economy (19% below the national average<sup>2</sup>), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%<sup>3</sup>), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits<sup>4</sup>).

However, the county has a significant number of opportunities, including local strengths in food and drink, tourism, and agriculture, specialisms in fast growing global markets like cyber security, an outstanding quality of life, and new university (New Model Institute in Technology and Engineering). The county is also very well placed to benefit from a post Covid lifestyle trend, as people now look to increasingly work remotely away from populated cities to locations offering a better quality of life.

<sup>1</sup> [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

<sup>3</sup> [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)

The market towns have a crucial role to play in addressing the long term economic challenges, and realising the county's many opportunities. They are key local centres for housing, culture, access to public services, tourism, with strong local communities and identities. Establishing great vibrant places to live and meaningful employment opportunities will be key to rebalancing the aging population by retaining/ attracting younger generations to study, live and work in the county for generations to come.

Bromyard is particularly well placed to realise some of these opportunities, significantly contributing the future economic success of the county as a whole. A highly attractive and popular market town, strategically well placed in terms of relationship to Hereford and Worcester, offering a great place to live, visit and work.

As people's approach to work and quality of life requirements change, Bromyard is well placed to benefit from an increasing transition to a digital economy, with people working from home or flexible workspaces in attractive, less densely populated locations away from city centres.

The Plan identifies a vision for growth and a programme of investment projects required to deliver the vision and support the economic development of Bromyard over the next fifteen years. Funding from many different sources will be needed to achieve them. The Plan identifies the timetable for delivery, lead body and potential sources of investment for each of the projects.

## Community Including the Impact of Covid-19

The damage to the economy and to health from Covid-19 has been felt across Herefordshire. During 2020 and the early part of 2021, the pandemic reached all corners of the county and has had an impact on every community. During 2020, the UK economy contracted by 9.9%. (source: Office for National Statistics<sup>5</sup>) It remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be, but within many sectors we are likely to see a shift to working, learning and engaging in commerce remotely on digital platforms.

The projects proposed in this Plan have been developed through engagement with key stakeholders in Bromyard and will help the town to attract essential investment as the need to promote recovery opens up new funding opportunities.

Attitudes towards working from home have changed substantially since the start of the COVID pandemic and many workers will continue to work from home long after it has ended.

There could be positive implications for Herefordshire's market towns in what is being termed 'hybrid working'. The Centre for Towns recently reported that its research indicates "big potential for places to market themselves as online working destinations" as predictions indicate that the longer people are required to work at home, the greater the adoption of home working will be beyond the current situation.

The best performing towns are ones with a healthy mix of age groups and professions. An increase in home working would have a significant positive impact in rebalancing Herefordshire's market towns demographics and towns should therefore actively promote themselves to attract in and retain a thriving working age population.

Towns will need to work closely with Herefordshire Council to ensure that digital connectivity is adequate to support the needs of home workers. Clearly, Herefordshire market towns have a significant 'quality of life' offer, with a good range of local services.

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/articles/coronavirusandtheimpactonoutputintheukeconomy/december2020>



## CONTEXT

Bromyard is a typical English market town, with a population of approximately 4,500 within the town itself (2011 census). It is located in the valley of the river Frome, approximately fifteen miles to the north-east of Hereford and is the centre for a number of parishes in the north-east of the county of Herefordshire, as well as several villages in neighbouring Worcestershire.

It is surrounded by and supports a spectacular rural hinterland and is often referred to as the 'Town of Festivals'; its festivals and events calendar is an example of what could be developed across the county and includes: an annual Speed Festival and Foodie Tour; a Town Crier Festival which involves representatives from across the UK; a highly successful rock music festival, Nozstock; a Folk Festival which includes music, crafts and workshops; and a Christmas tree festival.

The town has great potential to build on its existing visitor offer. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book and contains beautiful black and white half-timbered buildings, Georgian and Victorian facades, a Norman church, a toll house, a heritage centre, arts and crafts galleries, and a mix of local retail outlets.

In recent years, Bromyard has effectively become a dormitory town with many residents commuting to Worcester or Hereford for employment. The need for local employment opportunities, particularly in the manufacturing sector, was a consistent theme in discussions with stakeholders.

The town is bisected by the A44 which provides an important cross regional route for long distance freight, commercial and tourist traffic. Unlike many towns in Herefordshire, it has few problems with accessibility, although public transport provision is weak.

Bromyard town centre is home to a variety of independent retail businesses and has the potential capacity to host a regular weekly market in the market square. Bromyard is a primary location for food shopping for residents but, with targeted investment, its historic environment and niche retail offer could be developed to attract regional and national visitors.

The town centre has suffered from a lack of strategic investment for many years and it is widely accepted that improving the town's public realm and making it a more attractive destination for both residents and visitors will benefit the local economy and promote future growth within the town.

For the purpose of Rose Regeneration's work, Bromyard's town boundaries are those based on the Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA's) that we have used to inform the data analysis based on the 2019 Index of deprivation. The work has also been cognisant of the boundaries set out in the Herefordshire Core Strategy (2015).

## THE VISION FOR BROMYARD

Rose Regeneration has worked closely with stakeholders in Bromyard's future to develop an updated vision and key strategic objectives for the town within the next fifteen years:

We're 90 minutes from Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff but a world away from the rat-race. Bromyard has something for everyone and we're open for business. Bromyard will build on its proud market town heritage to attract people to live, to work, to invest, to visit and to play.

Our vision is rooted in our location in some of Britain's most beautiful countryside and in our ambitions to connect to the advanced industries and services in engineering, green technology, agri food, digital and circular economies which are emerging on our doorstep and to lead the way in artisan food and drink tourism. We will collaborate with our friends and neighbours to develop the lifelong skills of future

generations, to create an ever-more vibrant and attractive visitor economy and to realise our full potential as a sustainable, cohesive and dynamic community.

Key strategic objectives include making Bromyard:

- a place that encourages inward investment and new talent, with an excellent skills development offer, providing diverse career opportunities for our school and college leavers
- a place which is recognised regionally, nationally and globally for its artisan food and drink culture and experiential tourism offer, operates as a gateway for walking and cycling and has a national profile in terms of its festivals and events
- a place with a diverse and exciting retail offer a place which engages with and supports all parts of our community
- a more accessible place by improving our green transport connection links and active travel options

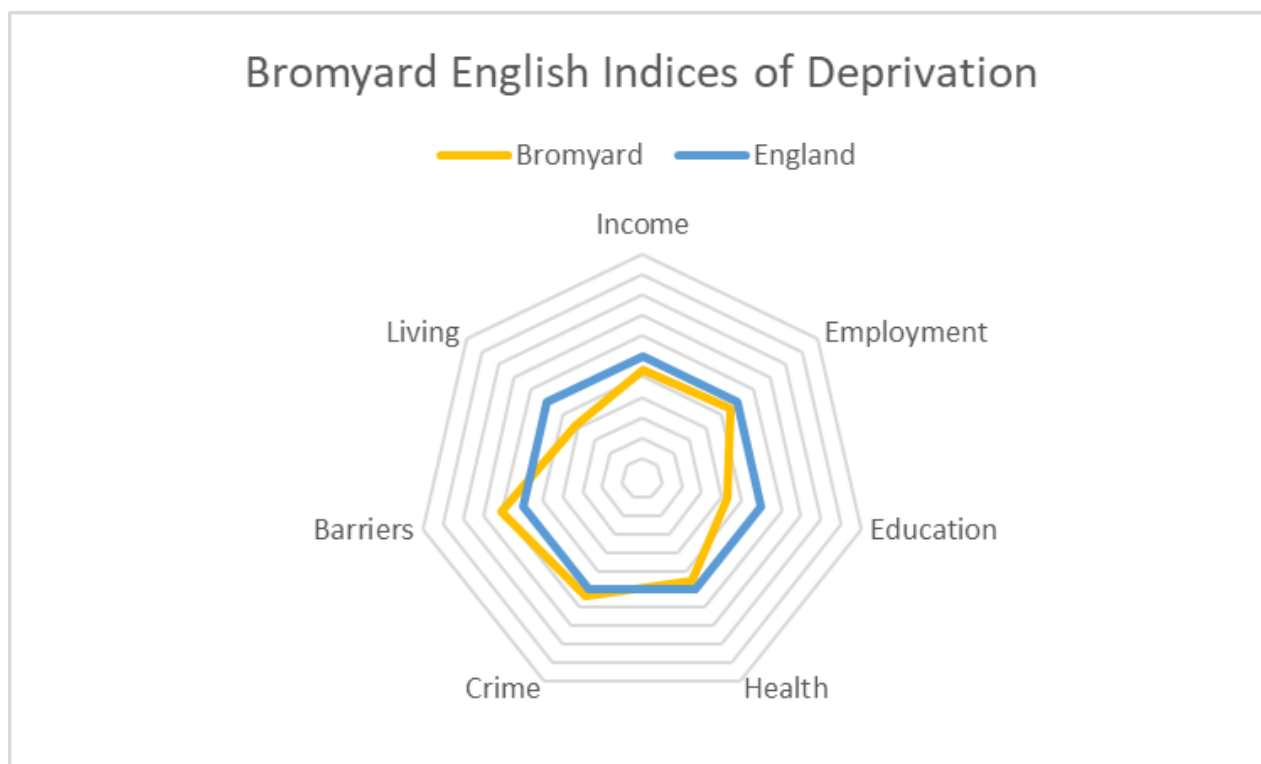
This vision provides the basis for our Town Investment Plan.

## THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

Bromyard is one of the smallest settlements in the county with a population in the town itself of 4,700 (2011 census) and surrounding hinterland of 9,050 (2019 Mid-Year Population Estimates ONS)

According to our economic analysis Bromyard:

- is more deprived on most domains in the English Indices of Deprivation than the England average with particular challenges around the skills profile of the town – the diagram below shows how Bromyard fares in relation to each domain against the national average;
- 25% of Bromyard's population is over 65 years old, 5% more than the England average of 20%;
- has a modestly smaller stock of jobs than the Herefordshire average;
- has a limited stock of jobs in knowledge intensive businesses;
- has experienced an increase in JSA claimants from 220 to 265 (a 20% increase) during the first half of the lockdown period (April-October 2020);
- has a higher proportion of jobs in agriculture, manufacturing and health than the national average;
- has a significantly higher proportion of low value properties than the national average.



The radar diagram ranks all 32,844 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England according to the indices of deprivation. Each LSOA has a population of circa 1,500 people or 650 households.

- The blue line indicates the England average;
- Within the blue line is more deprived;
- Outside the blue line is less deprived.

The radar diagram above is derived from the English Indices of Deprivation 2019. It ranks each neighbourhood in England in terms of their characteristics in relation to the following indicator sets:

- The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
- The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
- The Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- The Crime Domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.

## THE TOWN'S ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

This plan highlights some of the town's key assets including:

- Transport and connectivity to South Wales, Birmingham and the Midlands – Bromyard is perhaps best placed of all the towns in Herefordshire in relation to its geographic connections. There is also a challenge in this context, however, in that it has real potential to become a desirable commuter settlement rather than a place with a significant “live-work” character. Our proposals involve looking to make it more sustainable by developing new employment and enterprise opportunities.
- History and heritage buildings from the medieval, Georgian, Victorian, inter-war, post war and post millennium periods which are host to a high number of independent retailers both within the envelope of the town itself and its wider hinterland. This represents the particular history and development of the town outside of the focus of large multiples, mainly as a consequence of its small scale and relative isolation. As with many small locations, its retail and wider service catchment is threatened by a lack of financial capacity amongst many of its businesses. Our plans involve support for established and new indigenous entrepreneurs to grow its innate potential. The current character and townscape of the town makes a major contribution to its desirability and our proposed focus on its town centre as a location for investment is a key theme within this plan.
- Wye Valley AONB and Special Area of Conservation – Bromyard, whilst small, has a large visitor and domestic hinterland. This is enhanced by its setting as a traditional small rural service centre supporting a wider dispersed population – our proposals seek to build on the external recognition of its wider environment and the significance in the context of its setting.
- Tourism and the Visitor economy – taking a wider perspective, in addition to its established credentials as a festival base, our plans around enhancing the walking and cycling credentials of the town will complement its economic potential. The town benefits from the desire of individuals and businesses to unlock its economic potential.

## SPATIAL CONTEXT

Herefordshire Council's 2015 Core Strategy will be revised in the next eighteen months but the document contains a chapter on Place Shaping. This includes a vision for Bromyard focused on the town continuing to fulfil:

“a diverse range of important roles as a focus for residential, employment, recreational and cultural uses. The town will continue to act as a service centre for the surrounding rural area. The strategy promotes the continued economic development of the town and the vision is centred on meeting housing need (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel, facilitating employment generation and diversification and improving delivery and access to services”. (Section 4.1)

The Core Strategy takes a spatial approach in signalling how Bromyard can accommodate a strategic urban extension for residential development in the northwest area of the town. This includes a minimum of 500 new homes together with five hectares of new employment land. A minimum of 250 new homes were proposed within the Hardwick Bank area, North West of the town.

The Core Strategy recommends coordinating housing and employment developments to achieve greater economies of scale and ensure land uses are compatible (e.g. allowing small employment/mixed use opportunities within residential developments to reduce the need to travel).

The spatial impact of potential projects below will make Bromyard a more attractive place to live, work, invest and visit:

- Investment in the High Street and public realm will enhance Bromyard's appeal for both residents and visitors, opening up the market square, improving the functionality and appearance of empty retail units, promoting the town's indigenous artisan food and drink heritage and rationalising car parking provision.
- The development of a permanent festival site will underpin the success of a key county visitor attraction.
- The development of new employment land on the Linton Trading Estate will facilitate employment generation and place Bromyard at the heart county's ambitions to support the growth of green technology capacity.

Looking more widely at employment land, there appears to be a failure of the market to provide new employment land in the market towns. In the 10 years since 2011, there has been no significant (sites > 1 Ha) development of employment land in any of the market towns. This compares to a requirement identified in the Core Strategy for the period 2011 to 2031 of 40 Ha. There is some evidence that the lack of availability of employment land has led to investment being delayed or being made outside of the county.

In the north of Herefordshire – affecting Bromyard and Leominster there is currently a planning moratorium linked to phosphate levels in the River Lugg.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Following an initial introductory meeting in October 2020, Rose Regeneration worked with the Mayor, Town Clerk and other stakeholders to establish a steering group representing different interests, businesses and communities in Bromyard. A full list of steering group members is included in Appendix 3.

Early members of the steering group met Councillor Chowns during her visit to Bromyard in November and the full steering group has met subsequently in the ensuing period, identifying a long-list of more than 20 individual project proposals.

Group meetings have been complemented by one-on-one conversations with project sponsors and regular contact has been maintained with the Mayor, Councillor Chowns and MP for North Herefordshire to seek their views and advice on emerging project ideas.

Project ideas have been refined and developed through this process, supplemented by contact with business owners and potential funders, including a range of service areas within Herefordshire Council. In early March, the steering group reviewed a long list of project proposals and a short list of six projects was identified for inclusion in the Investment Plan. A meeting on 1st April agreed to the formation of a Community Interest Company (CIC) to ensure that these projects could seek funding not only from Herefordshire Council's capital funding programme but also from other public and private sources over the next ten to fifteen years.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change linked to the projects proposed arising from the strategy is set out below:

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Bromyard	Action	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation
EcoHub	Business and Economy	Shortage of employment opportunities	Acquire and encourage the development of new employment land	Up to 8 hectares of employment space	HCA job density 50 jobs/ha – extrapolated – 400 jobs	More sustainable community Rising local per capita GVA	Employment opportunities will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15
Bromyard Eastern Enhancement	Town/civic amenities Visitor economy Business and Economy	Low property values/weak independent retail/weak visitor economy	Revivify key elements of the tourism offer and stimulate new uses for key buildings	A 10% increase in average shopping spend in Bromyard according to our calculations would deliver £117,000 spend increase per week to local businesses. 10,000 more visitor spend in the area per year £70 per tourist - £700,000 per annum.	Stronger visitor economy and more inward migration. Promotion of local independent artisan food and drink and other businesses.	More sustainable/cohesive community Rising local per capita GVA.	Visitor arrivals and expenditure will rise to the national average within 5 years
				10,000 more visitors spend in the area per year £70 per tourist - £700,00 per year £79,000 - 9 jobs			

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Bromyard	Action	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation
Greenway	Visitor economy	Weak visitor economy	Revivify key elements of the tourism offer and stimulate new uses for key buildings	New cycling and walking space with Bromyard as a hub – 1000 tourists per year at £70 per tourist - £70,000 per annum	Stronger visitor economy	Healthier and more cohesive community	Visitor arrivals and expenditure will rise to the national average within 5 years
Health and Wellbeing Hub – (further discussion with Halo planned)	Town/civic amenities	Weak visitor economy	Revivify key elements of the tourism offer and stimulate new uses for key buildings	200m2 new health space 3 jobs, £325,000 £100,000 turnover per year	Increase footfall and repurposing of a key feature of the town centre	Healthier and more cohesive community	Visitor arrivals and expenditure will rise to the national average within 5 years
Skills Development	Skills	Lower than average skills and limited local training infrastructure	Link to other skills initiatives which are active in Herefordshire including the Hereford Towns Fund	Based on the overall targets and capacity for the Skills Foundry project 50 learners per year – for a minimum of 5 years	Better match between skills and employer needs in the local area	More vibrant local economy with better live/work opportunities	Local skills gap will close within 10 years to support new businesses and inward investment



## SUGGESTED PROJECTS

Projects and ‘investment themes’ emerged through the stakeholder engagement process. These projects and themes were validated through a wider stakeholder meeting in late December 2020 and subsequent group and one to one discussions in the first quarter of 2021.

The table above provides a short form summary by way of an overview of projects and themes, those projects that could be considered appropriate for Herefordshire Capital funding (amongst other sources) and individual descriptions of those projects that are considered strategically significant, with the potential to attract funding outside of Herefordshire Council Capital fund. It incorporates a Theory of Change, showing our aspirations for impact.

The package of projects identified in this Town Investment Plan will need to access a range of funding sources in order to be delivered.

In May 2021 the Town Council and wider stakeholders met to consider the relative priority to allocate to each project. A scoring matrix based on the good practice methodology identified by the Town Fund was used to assess the relative merit of each project. Within the matrix there are 8 themes chosen through a reflection by the consultancy team leading the research and validated as part of the prioritisation process in each town.

For Bromyard the key criteria were agreed following a discussion with the Steering Group from the town:

- contribution to net zero, attraction of more visitors/inward investment;
- Increased GVA (a measure of the productivity of businesses);
- increased business diversity (an increase to the range and variety of businesses operating locally);
- higher skills;
- better population balance (supporting a wide demographic spread of age groups);
- greater equity (supporting fairer access to all determinants of quality of life);
- equality agenda (eliminating any form of discrimination).

Each project was scored by the group on a scale of 1-5 (where one is lowest) to provide a group composite score. These scores were then used to rank the project. As set out in appendix 2.

## FUNDING

In addition to possible funding from the Council’s Employment Land and Incubation Space capital programme allocation budget (see introduction above) the majority of the projects identified will need to explore funding options which could include: private investment, including Section 106 funding; other council resources such as the Highways Capital Programme; Heritage Lottery; charitable trusts; other public sector funding such as the capital programmes of the West Mercia Police Service; the Hereford and Worcester Fire service; the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group; the Marches LEP; Homes England etc.

In addition to these sources of funding there are a range of Government funding opportunities already in place and more will be announced going forward. Some of the projects in the Plan will require revenue funding as well as capital investment. There may be opportunities to package projects together to bid for funding as well as to bid for funds in phases on the larger projects. Different funders will require different information and governance arrangements which will need to be considered on a bid by bid basis. The evidence base and supporting information produced to support this Plan will be a useful information and policy context to help inform bids for funding.



## Projects

The individual projects, set out in the templates below, have been identified as strategically important to the development of Bromyard's economy. The project summaries explain which intervention framework the projects will address, a brief project description, cost, timescales and outputs. There is also an explanation of the potential or identified demand for the projects as well as suggested funding sources and a possible exit strategy for each project to ensure sustainability.

Bromyard Eastern Enhancement Project							
<p>The eastern side of Bromyard, has great potential for the development as a transformative and integrated attraction of both existing and new residents and incoming visitors.</p> <p>Key elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Acquisition of 16.5 ha farmland to create a permanent festival site, new festival site access and link road between A44 and Tenbury Rd (removing HGV traffic through town).</li> <li>2) Community building and lake on festival site.</li> <li>3) Reconfiguration of parking provision.</li> <li>4) Market square improvements to encourage a sustainable street culture and evening economy, supporting a market, festivals, and arts projects and including a performance space.</li> <li>5) Improvement and full utilisation of empty independent retail units (shop front grants included)</li> <li>6) Public realm improvement – enhancement of environmental quality, by delivering new street furniture, signage, planters etc, in keeping with the town’s heritage</li> </ol>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><i>Indicative Cost and Matched Funding</i></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><i>How Long to Deliver?</i></td> <td style="width: 50%;"><i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">£6.2M</td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Up to 6 years</td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Improved community cohesion</p> <p>Attract more residents, businesses and visitors</p> <p>Public realm significantly enhanced</p> <p>100 new jobs</p> <p>100% increase in visitor numbers and visitor spend</p> <p>Local SME support</p> <p>Reduced traffic congestion</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<i>Indicative Cost and Matched Funding</i>	<i>How Long to Deliver?</i>	<i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i>	£6.2M	Up to 6 years	<p>Improved community cohesion</p> <p>Attract more residents, businesses and visitors</p> <p>Public realm significantly enhanced</p> <p>100 new jobs</p> <p>100% increase in visitor numbers and visitor spend</p> <p>Local SME support</p> <p>Reduced traffic congestion</p>
<i>Indicative Cost and Matched Funding</i>	<i>How Long to Deliver?</i>	<i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i>					
£6.2M	Up to 6 years	<p>Improved community cohesion</p> <p>Attract more residents, businesses and visitors</p> <p>Public realm significantly enhanced</p> <p>100 new jobs</p> <p>100% increase in visitor numbers and visitor spend</p> <p>Local SME support</p> <p>Reduced traffic congestion</p>					
<i>Economy and business</i>	Yes						
<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	Yes						
<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	Yes						
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	This is seen as a core priority by the group involved in the development of this plan based on their lived experience in Bromyard						
<i>Funding Sources</i>	Private sector, public grant funding						

Bromyard Eco-hub							
<p>Herefordshire has an opportunity to develop a competitive presence in the emerging green technology sector.</p> <p>Acquisition and development of saleable/leasable employment land on/adjacent to Linton Trading Estate (direct access to A44 equidistant between Worcester and Hereford and to M5) to create manufacturing capacity focussing on green technology.</p> <p>Founder owner/tenant being the Bromyard Electric Motor Vehicle Company, currently in the process of securing private sector funding to produce an electric waste-collection vehicle for Pedicargo in Hereford. Attractive sale/lease terms to attract new and established businesses with modern buildings and appropriate services.</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>Cost and Matched Funding</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>How Long to Deliver?</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i></th> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>£2.0-£3.0 million Herefordshire Council £20-25 million private/public sector</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>2021-2023  2023-2031</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>8 hectares of employment space</p> <p>HCA job density 50 jobs/ha – extrapolated – 400 jobs</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<i>Cost and Matched Funding</i>	<i>How Long to Deliver?</i>	<i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i>	<p>£2.0-£3.0 million Herefordshire Council £20-25 million private/public sector</p>	<p>2021-2023  2023-2031</p>	<p>8 hectares of employment space</p> <p>HCA job density 50 jobs/ha – extrapolated – 400 jobs</p>
<i>Cost and Matched Funding</i>	<i>How Long to Deliver?</i>	<i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i>					
<p>£2.0-£3.0 million Herefordshire Council £20-25 million private/public sector</p>	<p>2021-2023  2023-2031</p>	<p>8 hectares of employment space</p> <p>HCA job density 50 jobs/ha – extrapolated – 400 jobs</p>					
<i>Economy and business</i>	Yes						
<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	No						
<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	No						
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Bromyard currently has no capacity to incubate and support local businesses due to a decline in the availability of employment land						
<i>Funding Sources</i>	Herefordshire Council; Private sector, public grant funding						

Health and Wellbeing Centre (Bromyard High Street)			
	<i>Cost and Matched Funding</i>	<i>How Long to Deliver? From When to When?</i>	<i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i>
<p>Bromyard is well served by beauty boutiques. There would be a demand from residents from in and outside Bromyard for more friendly, up to date exercise options (particularly focused on modern trends like yoga pilates spinning etc).</p> <p>This demand would increase if the proposals were put in place to encourage opportunities for school and college leavers to stay live and work in Bromyard and would enhance the attractiveness of the town for a younger generation.</p> <p>It is envisaged that the project would involve identifying the space, investing a little in fitting out and then looking for independent businesses wanting to take on the running of the studios.</p>	£100-£150k	2021-23	<p>200m2 new health space 42 j3 obs, £325100,000 turnover per year</p>
<i>Economy and business</i>	Yes		
<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	Yes		
<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	Yes		
Demand Analysis	This is based on discussions with the development group in Bromyard and their local intelligence		
Funding Sources	Private sector		

Greenway			
<p>Phase 1: Permissive footpath along the disused railway line from Bromyard – A44 at Linton adjacent to proposed festival site.</p> <p>Phase 2: Create a multi-user track for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with limited mobility along the same route.</p> <p>Phase 3: Create similar multi-user track from Bromyard to Rowden benefitting Town Centre businesses with potential.</p>	<p><i>Cost and Matched Funding</i></p> <p>£700k</p>	<p><i>How Long to Deliver? From When to When?</i></p> <p>2021-2028</p>	<p><i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i></p> <p>1000 tourists per year at £70 per tourist - £70,000 per annum</p>
<i>Economy and business</i>	Yes		
<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	Yes		
<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	Yes		
Demand Analysis	On-going investigations with the proponents of this Herefordshire wide scheme in the context of its Bromyard components.		
Funding Sources	Central Government grant funding; private sector crowd-funding		

Skills Development - Ledbury, Leominster and Bromyard			
<p>To support the town's viability as a thriving balanced economy, the town needs to develop integrated and forward-looking skills development capacity to support its residents and to attract inward investment.</p> <p>The project, developed as a collaboration between NMITE, HCA and Rural Media as part of Hereford's Stronger Towns Funding bid, aims to include Herefordshire's market towns in a hub and spoke delivery model and will actively engage with Bromyard</p>	<p><i>Cost and Matched Funding</i></p> <p>500,000</p>	<p><i>How Long to Deliver?</i></p> <p>2021-2023</p>	<p><i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i></p> <p>Based on the overall targets and capacity for the Skills Foundry project 50 learners per year – for a minimum of 5 years</p>
<i>Economy and business</i>	Yes		
<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	No		
<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	No		
Demand Analysis	Extensive steering group demand to be tested through second stage town engagement.		
Funding Sources	Private sector, DfE, UK Shared Prosperity Fund		

## Next Steps

This is one of five Market Town Economic Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council for each of Herefordshire's market towns.

Herefordshire Council has identified a number of projects which could be funded by them. As a result in addition to this Market Town Investment Plan, Rose Regeneration has completed Outline Business Cases (OBCs) and Project Mandates for the following projects for the Council's consideration.

- An OBC has been developed and submitted for the Bromyard Eco-Hub

Once the Plans, OBCs and Project Mandates have been considered by Herefordshire Council it is recommended that the council works with the five market town councils to establish an appropriate delivery mechanism to oversee, secure funding for, and monitor the delivery of the MTIPs. This delivery mechanism should be led and supported by Herefordshire Council and should involve representatives from each Town Council.

# APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

National context	Regional Context	Herefordshire Context	Bromyard Context
<p>Industrial Strategy – ‘places’ foundation: tackling entrenched regional disparities.</p> <p>Industrial Strategy Productivity Evidence Review – some cities and rural county areas have been falling behind, including Herefordshire. County Councils Network analysis of GVA in 36 county areas found Herefordshire to be experiencing the smallest economic growth 5.3% between 2014 and 2018).</p> <p>A low carbon future in a changing climate – UK obligations under the 2015 Paris Agreement - setting a net zero target for carbon emissions by 2050.</p> <p>HM Treasury/Government department resources - levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people.</p> <p>Build Better, Build Greener, Build Faster - reforming the planning system (NPPF, Planning for the Future White Paper) to give more emphasis to quality, design and the environment.</p> <p>COVID-19 recovery measures - protecting and restoring livelihoods, improving living standards and new economic opportunities.</p>	<p>Local Industrial Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan – inclusive growth, connectivity, skills, enterprise and innovation, trade and investment. Herefordshire’s sectoral specialisms: food and drink, education, advanced manufacturing and engineering, defence and construction. Growth opportunities for (i) manufacturing and engineering, (ii) food supply chain/agri-tech innovation, and (iii) cyber security and resilience.</p> <p>Skills Plan and Skills Sectors Deep Dives – the provision of Higher Education provision and Further Education courses relevant to these growth opportunities in Herefordshire.</p> <p>Cyber Resilience Alliance / Science and Innovation Audit – the largest cluster of cyber security activity outside of London: growth in direct jobs, wider investment in products and processes and acting as a regional testbed.</p> <p>Growth Hub and Enterprise Zone with specialisms in defence and security at Skylon Park, Hereford.</p> <p>Economic recovery plan – investment in infrastructure and jobs: Hereford city streetscape improvements and NMITE Skylon campus development.</p>	<p>Herefordshire is a cold spot for social mobility – it is in the bottom 20 list of Local Authorities in England in terms of the chances that disadvantaged children will do well at school and get a good job.</p> <p>The importance of creating high-quality, highly skilled jobs against a backdrop of traditional low-skill, low-wage economy.</p> <p>County Plan – improving sustainability, connectivity, wellbeing and becoming carbon neutral by 2030-2031: Talk Community (hubs), community wealth building (increasing the amount of money that stays in the local economy); and Sustainable Food County (a whole system approach to tackling obesity, diet related ill health, food poverty, waste and climate change).</p> <p>Hereford Town Investment Plan – intended to deliver urban regeneration, a stronger skills base, and improved connectivity in the city. Under the strapline ‘green and fair’ the TIP recognises Hereford’s connectivity to market towns and countryside (e.g. tourism – attract and disperse approach). Telling stories about place, identifying and implementing a vision, strong partnership working and securing funding/investment are all needed for pandemic Recovery and Transformation.</p> <p>Skylon Park – Enterprise Zone for defence and security, advanced manufacturing, food and drink processing and sustainable technologies. Local Development Order to simplify planning arrangements. Weaving old industrial landscape with future proofing to allow for growth and change. Intended to act as a catalyst for economic growth across Herefordshire.</p> <p>Hereford Transport Strategy describes traffic flows, delays and congestion. It promotes schemes which increase physical activity (e.g. cycling, walking) and generate high value-for-money.</p>	<p>Herefordshire’s Economic Vision – enabling market towns to maximise their role in building thriving, distinctive, service centres that support their communities and rural hinterlands is a countywide ambition.</p> <p>Place-shaping for Bromyard is focused upon is centred on meeting housing need (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel, facilitating employment generation and diversification and improving delivery and access to services’.</p> <p>Bromyard has Georgian and Victorian facades, a Norman church, toll house, heritage centre, arts and crafts galleries, and a mix of local retail outlets.</p> <p>Bromyard is often described as the ‘Town of Festivals’ – with events including a speed festival, town crier festival, scarecrow festival, a gala, art walk weekend and folk festival.</p> <p>In response to COVID-19, the Town Council and Community Foundation provided funding to Citizens Advice Herefordshire and The Hope Family Centre to provide a new Citizens Advice service for Bromyard residents. This provides potential to support people helping them to address the issues related to their employment challenges.</p>

## APPENDIX 2 - PROJECT PRIORITISATION

This process was undertaken on a facilitated basis by the TIP Steering Group

Title	Category of Intervention	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
EcoHub Bromyard -	Employment Space	Light industrial units facilitating development of distinctive Green Technology hub	£2,000	5	2	5	5	4	4	4	3	80%
Bromyard Eastern Enhancement Project	Public Realm	Shop-front grants; market square repurposing; community food and drink enterprise; weekend market	£6,200	3	5	5	5	3	3	4	3	78%
Skills Development - Ledbury, Leominster and Bromyard	Skills Investment	To support the town's viability as a thriving balanced economy, the town needs to develop integrated and forward-looking skills development capacity to support its residents and to attract inward investment. The Skills Foundry project, developed as a collaboration between NMITE, HCA and Rural Media as part of Hereford's Stronger Towns Funding bid, aims to include Herefordshire's market towns in a hub and spoke delivery model and will actively engage with Bromyard	£500	0	0	4	4	5	4	5	5	68%
Greenway Bromyard -	Green Infrastructure	Gateway to Worcester-Bromyard-Leominster greenway	£700	3	5	4	4	1	3	3	3	65%
Health and Wellbeing Bromyard -	Commercial Development	High Street facility supporting/attracting local residents	£250	2	3	3	4	2	4	4	3	63%



## APPENDIX 3 MEMBERS OF BROMYARD TIP STEERING GROUP

Suzette Brunsdon- chair of Bromyard Town Council and Mayor of Bromyard

Annabel Moore- Company director and retired Solicitor

Jayne Bradley Ghosh- Director at Kitchen Food School and Business Manager at K4 architects

Charlie Martin - Director at Beautifully Bromyard Tourist Information

Jeremy Holden- Owner, Holden Vintage and Classic Ltd

John Clayton - Technical and Business Development Director

Susanna Forbes - Owner of Little Pomona Orchard & Cider

Roger Wilkins - retired Chartered Surveyor

Stuart Dawson - Chartered Surveyor

Mark Franklin- retired Accountant and Bromyard Town Councillor

Dee Dunne- Thomas Deputy Mayor of Bromyard and Vice chair of Bromyard Town Council

Alan Seldon- Herefordshire Council Councillor

Nigel Shaw - Herefordshire Council Councillor

Sheenagh Davis MBE Founder of the H.O.P.E. Centre Bromyard

Tom Fisher - Worcester Leominster Bromyard Greenway



# Kington Economic Investment Plan 2021



July 2021

---

*Kington strives to be a town linked to vibrant rural communities where individuals, businesses, creativity and community thrive, care and work together to create an exceptional quality of life for all. We strive to be a model of a contemporary small town seamlessly touching the past while embracing the future that offers exceptional quality of life at every stage of life respecting each other and the natural environment. Deeply rooted in our history and confident of our future, we cherish each other and our unique natural environment.*

Kington Town Economic Investment Plan Statement 2021

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Background	6
Context	9
The Main Challenges Facing the Town	10
The Vision for Kington	12
The Town's Assets and Strengths	13
Spatial Context	13
Stakeholder Engagement	15
Theory of Change	16
Suggested Projects	19
Appendix 1 – Strategic Context Summary	35
Appendix 2 – Project Prioritisation	36

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Market Town Investment Plans

This Kington Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Kington, play a critical role in the county's economy, as focal points for employment; for retail, tourism, leisure and culture; for business investment and growth; for housing; and for access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The market town investment plans identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county, how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

## The Vision for Kington

Kington strives to be a town linked to vibrant rural communities where individuals, businesses, creativity and community thrive, care and work together to create an exceptional quality of life for all. We strive to be a model of a contemporary small town seamlessly touching the past while embracing the future that offers exceptional quality of life at every stage of life respecting each other and the natural environment. Deeply rooted in our history and confident of our future, we cherish each other and our unique natural environment.

## The Main Challenges facing the town

Kington is the smallest market town in the county with a population of 3,277 (2019 Mid-Year Population Estimates ONS). It has 922 residents over the age of 65 years, 28% compared to the England average of 20%. It has 540 under 16 year olds who have limited access to activities and opportunities.

Kington has a weak visitor economy compared to the UK average. It has a smaller stock of jobs per head than the England average with low income levels and a low skills base. The town is more deprived than the England average in terms of employment, income, skills, and health. Kington suffered a loss of 280 jobs (24%) between 2015 and 2018 (1,160 to 880). Kington has a greater proportion of low value properties than the national average.

## The Town's Assets and Strengths

Kington is a distinctive town on the Welsh border which has a very strong vernacular and individual character making its built environment unique and engaging for visitors. The key gateway position of the town gives it real potential to operate as a gateway into Wales (and vice versa), as a small little-known settlement it has significant capacity with the right investment to delight and surprise people as a visitor destination exploiting its position as a location on the crossroads of the A49 and A44 with access to Wales and central locations in the Marches. The visitor appeal of the town is further enhanced by its access to both a river and little known but beautiful open spaces.

The town is a key walking node in relation to major routes such as Offa's Dyke and there is real potential to build on this aspect of its location and connections and raise awareness of the walking offer. The proposals to develop AONB status provide the opportunity for the town to benefit from a

new designation. It would both help raise the profile of the centre and potentially be the spur to further interest and investment by local businesses.

### Issues in Kington

Issues in Kington	Targets
Weak visitor economy	Kington becomes a more liveable place with a more effective high street repurposed around pedestrians through an innovative shared space facility within the next 5 years.
Weak visitor economy High Population of over 65s Vacant shops	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer.
Improved Food and drink Offer Weak visitor economy	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.
Low stock of jobs / Employment Opportunities Income Levels	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Weak visitor economy	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.

### Project summary

The MTIP identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town’s vision. These include:

Development of employment opportunities:

- New employment site

Improvements to support the visitor economy:

- Promotion of Kington’s role as a significant walking centre with a strong crafts sector
- Kington lighting and banners scheme
- Improved food and drink attraction/offer
- AONB Status
- Wesleyan Chapel

Civic amenities, housing, skills development and projects aimed at young people

- Shop/Building Frontage Scheme
- Kington High Street Regeneration and Kington Market Hall and surrounds
- Kington Police and Fire Station relocation and redevelopment

The MTIP shows how each of these projects contribute to the delivery of Kington’s Vision. It will provide a platform for successful funding bids as suitable funding opportunities become available.

Herefordshire Council will continue to work with Kington Town Council and other local stakeholders to identify new project and funding opportunities, carry out feasibility and foundation work, and support local organisations to apply for funding.

## BACKGROUND

This Kington Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Kington, play a critical role in the county's economy as focal points for: employment; retail, tourism, leisure and culture; business investment and growth; housing; and access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The market town investment plans (MTIPs) identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The MTIPs will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

### Community Including the Impact of Covid-19

The damage to the economy and to health from Covid-19 has been felt across Herefordshire. During 2020 and the early part of 2021, the pandemic reached all corners of the county and has had an impact on every community. During 2020, the UK economy contracted by 9.9%. (source: ONS<sup>1</sup>). It remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be, but within many sectors we are likely to see a shift to working, learning and engaging in commerce remotely on digital platforms.

The projects proposed in this Plan have been developed through engagement with key stakeholders in Kington and will help the town to attract essential investment as the need to promote recovery opens up new funding opportunities.

Attitudes towards working from home have changed substantially since the start of the COVID pandemic and many workers will continue to work from home long after it has ended.

There could be positive implications for Herefordshire's Market Towns in what is being termed 'hybrid working'. The Centre for Towns recently reported that its research indicates "big potential for places to market themselves as online working destinations" as predictions indicate that the longer people are required to work at home, the greater the adoption of home working will be beyond the current situation.

The best performing towns are ones with a healthy mix of age groups and professions. An increase in home working would have a significant positive impact in rebalancing Herefordshire's market towns demographics and towns should therefore actively promote themselves to attract in and retain a thriving working age population.

Towns will need to work closely with Herefordshire Council to ensure that digital connectivity is adequate to support the needs of home workers. Clearly Herefordshire market towns have a significant 'quality of life' offer, with a good range of local services.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/articles/coronavirusandtheimpactonoutputintheeconomy/december2020>

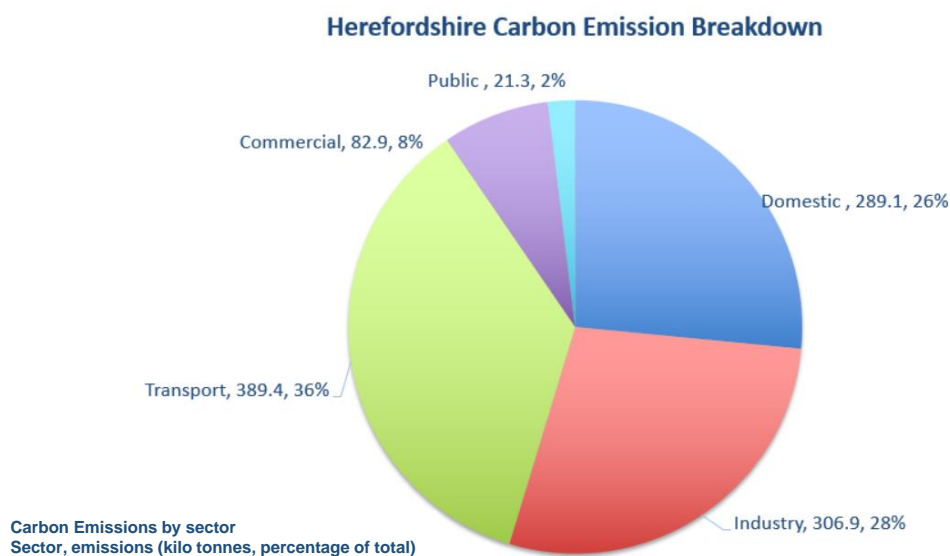


## Climate and Ecological Emergency

On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council. This declaration was subsequently updated and strengthened on 11 December 2020 when Herefordshire Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) following support for a climate and ecological emergency resolution at full council.

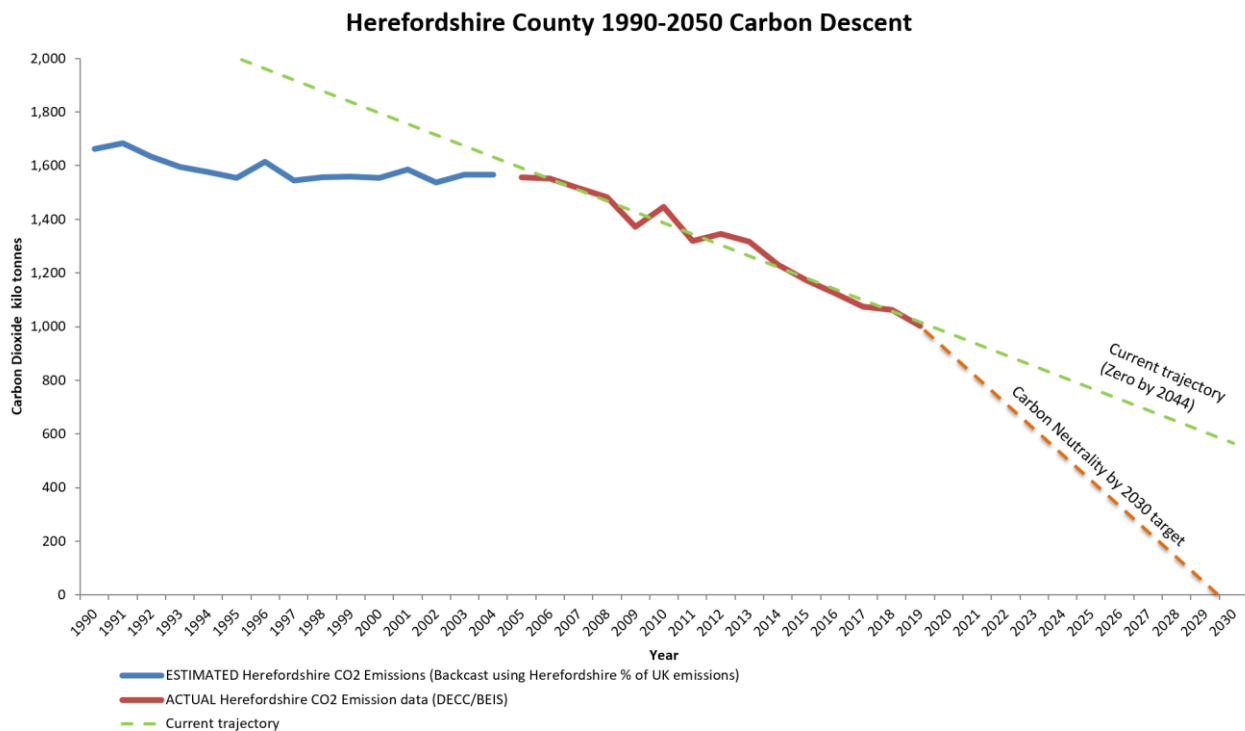
Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

The below chart illustrates Herefordshire’s current carbon emission split and the areas of focus for the Kington MTIP to support the Herefordshire’s journey to net zero.



In order to achieve this target, as illustrated below, a new Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership and Board have been established to catalyse and coordinate new action across the County. These actions have been grouped into a series of six different action plans including: Housing & Buildings; Transport; Energy; Farming & Land Use; Waste and Food.

The details of the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership, including the six themed action plans are set out: <https://zerocarbon.herefordshire.gov.uk/>



As a key strategic plan the Kington MTIP is strongly committed to delivering Herefordshire’s net zero and nature rich commitment and will work in partnership with its communities, businesses and the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Board to achieve this through the development and delivery of the plan.

## Economy

Herefordshire faces a number of long term economic challenges such as the lowest level of productivity of any county in England<sup>2</sup>, a low wage economy (19% below the national average<sup>3</sup>), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%<sup>4</sup>), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits<sup>5</sup>).

However, the county has a significant number of opportunities, including local strengths in food and drink, tourism, and agriculture, specialisms in fast growing global markets like cyber security, an outstanding quality of life, and new university (New Model Institute in Technology and Engineering). The county is also very well placed to benefit from a changing post Covid lifestyle trend, as people now look to increasingly work remotely away from populated cities to locations offering a better quality of life.

The market towns have a crucial role to play in addressing the long term economic challenges, and realising the county’s many opportunities. They are key local centres for housing, culture, access to public services, tourism, with strong local communities and identities. Establishing great vibrant places to live and meaningful employment opportunities will be key to rebalancing the aging

<sup>2</sup> [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)

population by retaining/ attracting younger generations to study, live and work in the county for generations to come.

Kington is particularly well placed to realise some of these opportunities, significantly contributing the future economic success of the county as a whole. A highly attractive and popular market town, offering a great place to live, visit and work.

As people's approach to work and quality of life requirements change, Kington is well placed to benefit from an increasing transition to a digital economy, with people working from home or flexible workspaces in attractive, less densely populated locations away from city centres.

The Plan identifies a vision for growth and a programme of investment projects required to deliver the vision and support the economic development of Kington over the next fifteen years. Funding from many different sources will be needed to achieve them. The Plan identifies the timetable for delivery, lead body and potential sources of investment for each of the projects.

## CONTEXT

Kington is the smallest of Herefordshire's market towns with a population of just over 3,000. Kington town is an important service centre for its rural hinterland. The Kington economy has suffered along with the fortunes of the farming industry in the area. Its rural location and lack of good transport connections means a shortage local employment opportunity, with low pay rates and many part-time occupations in small businesses including farming and the retail and service sectors.

There is a small tourist industry, though concentrated in the summer months, but Kington maintains the air of an unspoilt town on the borders. There is a traditional livestock market, situated off Duke Street, on a Thursday, where farmers bring their stock to market. There is currently a weekly food and crafts market every Friday and also a W.I. market in Bridge Street on Friday morning where home cooked goods are sold. The High Street has a number of resilient and interesting independent shops.

The Town is bypassed by the A44 which was formerly a trunk road and still provides an important cross regional east/west route between England and Wales for long distance freight, commercial and tourist traffic. It is connected to Hereford by the A4111/A438 or alternatively the A480 through Lyonshall and Credenhill.

The town is identified as one of the five market towns in the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy to have a good provision of independent retailers. Kington is a primary location for food shopping for residents, but its historic environment and niche retail offer also makes it an attractive destination for visitors.

Kington has a different employment profile compared to other parts of Herefordshire – locally, there are more self-employed people and more people working in agriculture, construction, transport, accommodation and skilled trades. While a proportion work in Kington itself, many travel to other parts of Herefordshire, Powys and further afield for work.

It is widely accepted that improving the town centre and making it an attractive destination for both residents and visitors will benefit the local economy and promote future growth within the town.

For the purpose of this Plan the town boundaries are those based on the Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA's) for Kington we have used to inform the data analysis based on the 2019 Index of deprivation. The work has also been cognisant of the boundaries set out in the Kington Neighbourhood Plan and Kington Town.

## THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

Rose Regeneration has undertaken a full review of all extant documents produced in the last five years relating to Kington's economic and community development (see Appendix 1). This contextual analysis has informed the selection and prioritisation of investment proposals in the Town Investment Plan.

The main challenges facing Kington:

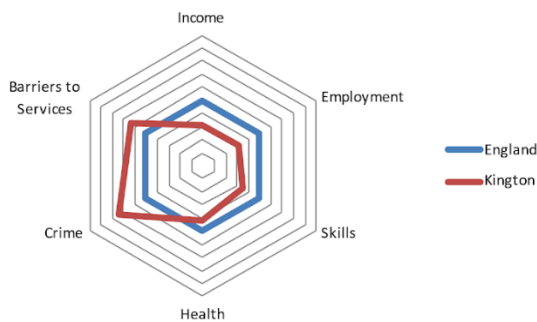
- Weak visitor economy vs UK average;
- Low Income levels;
- Low Skills Base;
- Only less deprived than the England average in terms of Crime and Barriers to Services;
- Smallest of the market towns. Population just over 3,000 with a higher proportion of over 65s than the national average;
- Significantly smaller stock of jobs per head than the national average;
- Loss of 250 jobs 2015 -18. Key sectors: agriculture, manufacturing, construction, retail, real estate, health;
- Higher proportion of low value properties than the national average.
- Shortage of activities and opportunities for young people

We have reviewed the 2019 Indices of deprivation to identify the main challenges facing the town the key findings of this work are summarised below:

## English Indices of Deprivation 2019

### Kington

### Domains of Deprivation



Domains	England Average	Kington
Income	16422	10083
Employment	16422	10440
Skills	16422	11620
Health	16422	13809
Crime	16422	24602
Barriers to Services	16422	20929

The radar diagram ranks all 32,844 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England according to the indices of deprivation. Each LSOA has a population of circa 1,500 people or 650 households.

- The blue line indicates the England average;
- Within the blue line is more deprived;
- Outside the blue line is less deprived.

The radar diagram above is derived from the English Indices of Deprivation 2019. It ranks each neighbourhood in England in terms of their characteristics in relation to the following indicator sets:

- The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
- The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
- The Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- The Crime Domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.

- The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.

## THE VISION FOR KINGTON

Kington strives to be a town linked to vibrant rural communities where individuals, businesses, creativity and community thrive, care and work together to create an exceptional quality of life for all. We strive to be a model of a contemporary small town seamlessly touching the past while embracing the future that offers exceptional quality of life at every stage of life respecting each other and the natural environment. Deeply rooted in our history and confident of our future, we cherish each other and our unique natural environment.

### Strategic Objectives

This vision is the basis of an integrated and forward-looking development strategy which links business, industry and tourism with community, rural life and the countryside to a sustainable and green future.

Our key strategic objectives include making Kington a place that:

Celebrates its environment and welcomes visitors by:

- providing a thriving and diverse tourism economy rooted in its unique heritage and nationally-renowned walking
- providing a distinctive and high quality built and natural environment that is easy to explore
- showcasing a rich and accessible local heritage that can be shared by residents and visitors
- demonstrating the highest standard of design – respecting the scale, style and setting of the townscape/landscape.
- demonstrating that it is actively addressing climate and ecological issues to support the present and improve the future

Performs a role as an attractive and vibrant local service and employment centre:

- which provides a range of services to support the residents of the town and surrounding villages
- which promotes Kington and its hinterland as a location which encourages small businesses, supports farming
- which encourages and enhance the use of all community facilities.
- which provides an alternative and exciting independent retail and food and drink offer
- which provides a pedestrian and cycle friendly High Street and town centre shopping and visitor environment
- which provides appropriate sites and premises for local businesses to thrive

## THE TOWN'S ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

We have set out below the key assets and strengths of the town

- Heritage Buildings – Kington is a distinctive town on the Welsh border which has a very strong vernacular and individual character making its built environment unique and engaging for visitors
- Visitor economy potential – the key gateway position of the town gives it real potential to operate as a gateway into Wales (and vice versa), as a small little-known settlement it has significant capacity with the right investment to delight and surprise people as a visitor destination exploiting its position as a location on crossroads of A49 and A44 with access to Wales and central locations in the Marches. The visitor appeal of the town is further enhanced by its access to both a river and little known but beautiful open spaces.
- A Walking Hub – the borderlands nature of the town makes it a key walking node in relation to major routes such as Offa's Dyke and there is real potential to build on this aspect of its location and physical connections and raise awareness of the walking offer.
- Natural Environment/ Rural Hinterland – the proposals to develop AONB status provide the opportunity for the town to benefit from a new designation. It would both help raise the profile of the centre and potentially be the spur to further interest and investment by local businesses.
- Well performing schools – in terms of residential desirability the remote and high-quality environment along with its well performing schools make Kington an attractive locale for new residents seeking the opportunity to live in a rural milieu. This is an asset for local employers and is attractive to those looking to move out of Cities to work from home and can support more local spend.

## SPATIAL CONTEXT

The Herefordshire Core Strategy contains a chapter on place-shaping. This contains a vision for Kington focused upon 'the creation of new homes, new employment opportunities, delivery of and access to services, including affordable housing, reducing the need to travel to other centres, and utilising the natural and historic environment as economic assets ... Kington's role in providing facilities and services to its hinterland should be maintained and, where possible, enhanced. However, as the smallest of the market towns and with significant environmental and locational constraints, the challenges that the town faces are such that it will need to be flexible in terms of the way it both encourages and accommodates development'. A review of the Core Strategy has now been commenced which will update the evidence base particularly in relation to biodiversity and green infrastructure. This links to the Herefordshire Green Infrastructure Study of 2010.

The Core Strategy takes a spatial approach in signalling how Kington can support rural regeneration within the town itself and also for the area it serves. While Kington is expected to accommodate 200 new homes during the plan period [a mix of market and affordable sizes and types], no strategic housing locations are proposed for Kington, with new housing accommodated on small scale sites that support the business, community and visitor facilities. For example, by making available small scale employment sites, maintaining and enhancing the retail, leisure or office offer of the town, make provision for infrastructure and amenity space and enhance the historic and heritage assets (e.g. important buildings, scenic views, landscape features). In aligning with the Core Strategy, the Kington Neighbourhood Plan refers to:

Proposals which make better use of land at Hatton Gardens Industrial Estate and Arrow Court Industrial Estate as well as supporting small-scale new build or workshops or the conversion of buildings to business use (e.g. live-work units). Intensive husbandry enterprises will only be supported where any adverse impacts (e.g. environment, traffic) can be mitigated.

Kington has a conservation area, designated in 1969, which recognises the town's architectural and historical significance dating back to the 12th century and leading to a small, historic market town with a tight urban grain with burgage boundary walls. Kington includes a Market Hall and former old Wesleyan Chapel, both Grade II listed buildings. The Conservation Area is currently on the national Heritage at Risk Register and key heritage features that should be protected and taken forward within future schemes form part of the evidence base for the Plan. The Plan encourages retail, leisure, office, commercial, cultural and tourism developments.

Kington is described as 'a centre for walkers' and has walkers are welcome status. The Town is situated close to the Offa's Dyke Path, The Mortimer Trail, The Arrow Valley Trail, The Herefordshire Trail and The Wyche Way, all long-distance footpaths. Kington hosts an annual festival titled 'Kington Walks'. The Plan seeks to promote and develop this niche market and enhance facilities that can support this type of visitor (e.g. local food outlets). Kington also has a food, arts and crafts market and a local food market. The Kington Livestock Market holds regular sheep and cattle sales. The Plan focuses on extending the variety, choice and quality of shops and services so as to improve the overall attractiveness of the town centre.

The spatial impact of the proposed MTIP priority projects will, when aligned with Core Strategy and Neighbourhood Plan, make Kington a more attractive place to live, work, invest and visit:

- The refurbishment and repurposing of the Market Hall would reclaim one of the most attractive and important spaces in Kington, underpinning footfall and creating a visible anchor for the town's visitor economy;
- The proposed investment in the High Street will support improved footfall and encourage further investment in the town;
- The investment in the town's footpath network will provide an improved product to support the promotion of the town as a walking hub.
- AONB status would protect the natural environment surrounding the town and enhance the activity-based tourism offer.



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Plan has been developed through a dialogue with as many stakeholders in Kington's future as possible, in order to establish a solid evidence base, of demand and need. Engagement with Kington Town Council, the Local Herefordshire Council Member, local business community, voluntary sector and other key local stakeholders has played a major role in the development of this Plan.

The process of developing the Plan commenced with a town walk and follow-up meeting involving the Herefordshire Council Cabinet Member, the local Herefordshire Councillors, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Kington, Kington Town Councillors and local businesses. Kington Town Council, which played a key role in helping to identify all the key stakeholders in the Town. This was followed up by some 50 individual contacts by email, telephone and video call as well as engagement with the public and voluntary organisations.

The next significant engagement event was a town Zoom meeting to which all those identified were invited; this meeting was chaired by the Mayor and included twenty local stakeholders. The meeting identified a number of themes for the Town Investment Plan to consider and develop. A number of thematic meetings with key stakeholders were then held to consider the key themes in more detail and identify the vision, strategic objectives and project ideas for inclusion in the Plan. In addition to these themed meetings a young people's focus group was held to seek the views of young people in the town.

Following the completion of these meetings, there has been a range of consultations and discussions with potential delivery and funding partners. This has included engagement with private landowners, a number of Herefordshire Council officers, the Town Clerk, Kington Town Councillors, and others.

Throughout the process, there has been regular dialogue with representatives of Herefordshire Council.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change linked to the projects proposed arising from the strategy is set out below:

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Kington	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Kington High Street Regeneration	Tourism/Visitors Town/Civic amenities	Weak visitor economy High Population of over 65s Vacant shops	Invest in public realm and in active travel measures and balanced car parking provision to support improved footfall at both ends of the Town	Refurbished public realm New car parking spaces provided at bottom end of the Town	Improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists Increased footfall in the town centre	Increased tourism spend in the local economy Increased resident spend in the local economy More vibrant High street Better functioning town centre	Kington becomes a more liveable place with a more effective high street repurposed around pedestrians through an innovative shared space facility within the next 5 years
Police and Fire Station relocation and redevelopment	Town/Civic Amenities	Availability of Affordable housing	Bring forward more affordable housing	Improved and more efficient public services rationalising public estate to open up opportunities for investment new homes provided close to town centre	People of all backgrounds and means supported in living in Kington	A more sustainable and vibrant town	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer
Tourism offer/Walking and Craft Hub	Tourism/Visitors Town/Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Develop and promote Walking to increase awareness of the walking and Craft	Increase in tourism footfall	More people enjoy the tourism offer of Kington, more	Increased tourism potential in Kington realised	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Kington	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
			related tourism offer		local jobs sustained		
Shop/building frontage grant scheme	Tourism/Visitors Town /Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Investment in key buildings in conservation area	Improved Built environment in the Town	More footfall and private investment	More demand to visit and invest in the town	Visitor footfall increases and the town centre has a repurposed high street within the next 5 years
Kington Market Hall and surrounds	Tourism/Visitors Town/Civic amenities	Weak visitor economy	Invest in key public building to encourage a wide range of activities to encourage more visitors and footfall in the Town	An attractive multi-purpose public space for the Town Focal space/point for key events	More people enjoy the tourism offer of Kington; more local jobs sustained	Improved tourism offer and/or town amenities	Kington becomes a more liveable place with a more effective high street repurposed around pedestrians through an innovative shared space facility within the next 5 years
Improved Food and drink Offer	Tourism/visitors	Improved Food and drink Offer	Support the development of more local food and drink related business and identify the opportunities for physical premises investment in this context	More local sourcing and selling of food	Increased dynamism of local food and drink sector	More dynamic local economy	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Kington	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Hatton Gardens Extension/new Employment Site	Business/Economy	Low stock of jobs/ Employment Opportunities Income Levels	Acquire and encourage the development of new employment land and/or business space	new employment land new employment space new jobs	Long term supply of employment land and growth secured and managed	Improved job opportunities and income levels	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
AONB Status	Tourism/Visitors	Weak visitor economy	Work actively to explore and support the achievement of AONB status	Achievement of new landscape designation	Enhanced tourism brand and offer for Kington	More dynamic and employment generating tourism offer	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.
Wesleyan Chapel	Business/Economy	Run-down buildings	Investment in key buildings	Creation of a new residential or commercial space	Enhanced liveability and more commercial space in Kington	More attractive and vibrant town centre	Visitor footfall increases and the town centre has a repurposed high street within the next 5 years
Kington lighting and banners scheme	Town/Civic Amenities Tourism/Visitors	Weak visitor economy	Support the implementation of the lighting and banners scheme	Improved fittings for lighting and other decorations	More people enjoy the tourism offer of Kington, more local jobs sustained	Improved tourism offer and/or town amenities	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Kington	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Accessibility, improved Bus and Car parking offer	Town/Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy High Population of over 65s Vacant shops	Holistic investment in the civic, employment and visitor infrastructure make Kington a more balanced place in terms of its demography	Refurbished public realm New car parking spaces provided at bottom end of the Town	Improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists Increased footfall in the town centre	Increased tourism spend in the local economy Increased resident spend in the local economy More vibrant High street Better functioning town centre	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer

## SUGGESTED PROJECTS

The following projects and ‘investment themes’ emerged through the stakeholder engagement process. These projects and themes were validated through a wider stakeholder meeting in late December 2020 and subsequent group and one to one discussions in the first quarter of 2021.

The tables below provides a short form summary by way of an overview of projects and themes, those projects that could be considered appropriate for Herefordshire Employment Land and Incubation Space capital programme funding (below) and individual descriptions of those projects that are considered strategically significant, with the potential to attract alternative funding outside of the council. It is supported by a theory of change table, showing our aspirations for impact.

The package of projects identified in this Town Investment Plan will need to access a range of funding sources in order to be delivered.

Herefordshire Council has earmarked some £20 million for Employment Land and Incubation Space capital programme as an investment pot for capital projects in the county’s five market towns.

This funding can be used by the council to invest in projects which can demonstrate an appropriate business case which show the ability of the projects to generate capital receipts or income which can be used to payback the initial investment over time. Some of the projects in the Plan may secure funding through this route subject to detailed business cases being developed and considered by the council.

The majority of the projects identified will need to explore alternative funding options which could include private investment including , Heritage Lottery, charitable trusts, other public sector funding such as the capital programmes of the West Mercia Police Service, the Hereford and Worcester Fire service, the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, the Marches LEP, Homes England etc. In addition to these sources of funding there are a range of Government funding opportunities already in place and more will be announced going forward. Some of the projects in the Plan will require revenue funding as well as capital investment. There may be opportunities to package projects together to bid for funding as well as to bid for funds in phases on the larger projects. Different funders will requires different information and governance arrangements which will need to be considered on a bid by bid basis. The evidence base and supporting information produced to support this Plan will be a useful information and policy context to help inform bids for funding.

In May 2021 the Town Council and wider stakeholders met to consider the relative priority to allocate to each project. A scoring matrix based on the good practice methodology identified by the Town Hub which supports the implementation of the Town Fund was used to assess the relative merit of each project. Within the matrix there are 8 themes chosen, identified and validated through local stakeholder consultation.

For Kington the key criteria agreed with local stakeholders were: contribution to net zero; attraction of more visitors/inward investment; increased GVA (a measure of the productivity of businesses); increased business diversity (an increase to the range and variety of businesses operating locally); higher skills; better population balance (supporting a wide demographic spread of age groups); greater equity (supporting fairer access to all determinants of quality of life) and equality agenda (eliminating any form of discrimination). Each project was scored by the group on a scale of 1-5 where one is lowest to provide a group composite score. These scores then used to rank the project as set out in the summary table below. A summary of the process is set out at Appendix 2

### Summary Table

Project	Summary	Potential Funding Source
1. Shop/Building Frontage Scheme	A public sector grant scheme is proposed to encourage investment in the frontages of shops and other town centre buildings to make the town a place to visit and spend time in. Elsewhere in the country grant schemes have been successfully used to encourage property owners to invest in town centre properties. Provisional budget - £75,000	Government Grants/Private Sector/Historic England
2. Kington High Street Regeneration	The main shopping street in Kington is narrow making it difficult to visit, shop and spend time in the town centre. The proposal is that the High Street should be refurbished to make it more pedestrian friendly whilst maintaining vehicle access throughout the day. Provisional budget - £2 million	Future capital grant programmes such as Levelling Up

## Summary Table

Project	Summary	Potential Funding Source
=3. Tourism Offer	<p>Kington's role as a significant walking Centre with a strong crafts sector should be promoted and developed. Investment is proposed in the local footpath network as well as in interpretation material, signage with a focus on walking and possibly crafts and the development of walking App for use on smart phones.</p> <p>Provisional budget - £50,000</p>	<p>Herefordshire Destination BID Private Sector Herefordshire LCWIP – Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan /</p>
=3. Kington Market Hall and surrounds	<p>The proposal is to renovate/refurbish Kington Market Hall and surrounding area and to utilise the market hall as a focus for crafts and associated activities. There is also an opportunity to add more interpretative material about the town to promote its key attractions including the walking routes.</p> <p>Provisional budget - £250,000</p>	<p>Herefordshire Council potential asset transfer to Kington Town Council Plus, range of external grants Private sector</p>
=3/new employment site	<p>There is the opportunity to explore a small extension to Hatton Gardens or a new site along the Bypass A range of small-scale employment uses and start up units could be accommodated on land near or adjacent to the existing Estate.</p> <p>Provisional budget - tbc</p>	<p>Private sector Marches LEP, Government Grant Herefordshire Council,</p>
6. Kington lighting and banners scheme	<p>This project aims to light up key elements of the Town throughout the year and at the same time make a significant improvement to the Christmas lights. It will ensure key buildings and streets are lit and or decorated with banners etc to support key events and activities including walking and crafts.</p> <p>Provisional budget -£50,000</p>	<p>Kington Town Council</p>
=7. Improved food and drink attraction/offer	<p>Kington and the surrounding villages home to a number of food and drink manufacturing businesses which would support the development of the town's visitor economy. A small-scale food and drink manufacturer such as a brewery/distillery and associated visitor facility could attract significant additional footfall to the Town. There are also a number of old and rundown pubs/former pubs in the town which would benefit from refurbishment and could be used to further improve the existing food and drink offer. Provisional budget - £1 million</p>	<p>Private sector/ Government Grant</p>

## Summary Table

Project	Summary	Potential Funding Source
=7. AONB Status	The proposal is to include Kington and surrounding area in England and Wales in the designation of a new AONB. Such a designation will significantly enhance the profile of Kington as a walking town. Provisional budget - £200,000	Central Government Natural England CPRE
9. Wesleyan Chapel	This iconic listed building is in a key location near to the hub of the town centre. The building is in disrepair and needs significant investment it has potential for a range of uses. It has just changed ownership and the new owners should be supported in reviewing the future of the building. Provisional budget- £2 million	Private Sector
10. Kington Police and Fire Station relocation and redevelopment	There is an opportunity to relocate the Police and Fire Stations from their current location in Churchill Road to provide new modern facilities with lower maintenance costs, better access and potentially faster response times. This could also allow the existing sites to be redeveloped for housing. Provisional budget - £2 million	One Public Estate, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service West Mercia Constabulary

The project below has been adjusted to reflect the views of the group so that it addresses wider access issues and electric charging points for cars as well as car parking

Accessibility, improved Bus/Car parking offer	A full review of the location, quantity and demand for car parking and bus services in the town is required to consider improved public transport links and car parking to serve the southern end of the Town. The current Livestock Market site provides an opportunity to improve car parking in the Town.	Herefordshire Council
-----------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------



## Suggested Projects

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: <b>Kington High Street Regeneration</b>					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description:</i> Over the years several ways of improving the High Street have been considered but there is only one which allows all the constrains to be met and that is combine the space with pedestrians ensuring that it is predominately pedestrian and the vehicles are secondary.</p> <p>The road and pavements of Kington High Street are a public asset owned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire Council will therefore need to agree, design and implement any regeneration proposals for the Street. To inform a possible design for the regeneration scheme, it is recommended that Herefordshire Council commission a Transport study for Kington in line with similar studies completed in each of the other market towns. Such a study will be able to consider the nature of the scheme in the context of wider transport needs and can be used to inform a bid to the Council's Highways capital programme as well as other potential funding schemes</p>			<i>Indicative Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			£2 million	3 years	A new public realm and high street offer for Kington
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Chamber of Trade and stakeholder feedback				
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Public sector grants/ investment				
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	The ongoing maintenance responsibilities will stay with the current property owners.				

Project	Delivery Model	Rationale
<p>The works could cost in the order of £2million.</p>	<p>Whilst not a perfect fit with the mechanics of the capital budget this opportunity does provide scope for engagement with a number of commercial owners of properties in relation to joint venture work and capital investments (below the state aid threshold) in the fabric of key premises. There is also scope to provide enhanced and charged for public and market space.</p> <p><b>Next Steps</b> Council to consider preparing a transport plan for Kington and commission feasibility work to inform its future Highways Capital Programme</p>	<p>As a consequence of current market failure it is unlikely that normal development equations would lead to this level of key high street investment. This is particularly true in view of the need to think about long term re-visioning of the High Street. Many of the approaches proposed to redeveloping commercial space, which supports commercial development do not fit traditional investment models. A local authority is equipped to borrow at lower commercial rates and take a very long view in the way it approaches regeneration, having regard to social value alongside commercial returns</p>

Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Kington Shop/ building frontage grant scheme				
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities	
<p>Description: Investment in the public realm needs to be complemented by investment in the frontages of shops and other town centre buildings to make the town a place to visit and spend time in. A grant scheme is required to encourage property owners to invest in town centre properties. It is suggested that any grant from the scheme would need to be 50% matched by the private property owners making the application.</p> <p>It is recommended that grants should be dependent on the property condition and private sector match would need to be between £1000 and £5000 per property.</p>		Cost	Timescale	Outputs
Demand Analysis	Chamber of Trade and stakeholder feedback – cost based on consultation with Leominster Heritage Action Zone for comparison	£75,000	1 year - A quick win opportunity to support post-covid recovery	At least 30 properties improved
Potential funding sources	Private Sector, Government Grants, Heritage Lottery, ,			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	The ongoing maintenance responsibilities will stay with the current property owners.			

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Kington Hatton Gardens Extension/new employment site

Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
<p>Description: The adopted Herefordshire Core Strategy confirms that the Hatton Gardens industrial estate will continue to serve the employment needs of Kington. Whilst not the only employment site in the town it is the best located in a strategic position off the A44.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to bring forward land near to the existing Hatton Gardens Industrial Estate for small-scale B1 and B8 uses or along the Kington Bypass. Herefordshire Council could seek to acquire a site to ensure an improved supply of employment land and premises to serve the town.</p> <p>Without an intervention the current owners of the land are unlikely bring forward any development and future employment opportunities in the town will be limited.</p>			Indicative Cost	Timescale	Outputs
			Demand Analysis	Evidence base for revised Core Strategy/ Future proposed draft Neighbourhood Plan	
Potential funding sources	Herefordshire Council Employment Land and Incubation Space capital budget, (refunded through land sales and income), Marches LEP, Central Government, Private sector,				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Sell developed sites to private sector or retain as an income stream.				

## Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Food and drink offer

Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
<p><i>Description:</i> Kington and its environs are home to a number of food and drink manufacturing businesses which could potentially further support the development of the town's visitor economy. A town centre distillery and or brewery with an associated visitor centre such as the Ludlow Brewery in Shropshire could generate significant visitor numbers.</p> <p>It is recommended that Herefordshire Council and Kington Town Council may work with local businesses and other interested parties to find a suitable site/building which could further develop existing operations and support a new visitor attraction and potentially other associated activities. There are also a number of old and rundown pubs/former pubs in the town which would benefit from refurbishment and could be used to further improve the existing food and drink offer as well as arrange community events and activities such as film nights and could include community owned and run models.</p>			Cost	Timescale	Outputs
			Up to £1million to be borne by private sector / charitable trusts	Within 5 years	Visitor numbers and spend  Jobs
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Based on business planning of individual businesses				
Potential funding sources	Private Sector, Heritage Lottery, adhoc grants and Charitable Trusts depending on the governance model.				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	None required to be managed by private or other independent entities				

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Kington Police and Fire Station relocation and redevelopment					
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
Description There is an opportunity to relocate the Police and Fire Stations from their current location in Churchill Road This will also allow the existing site to be redeveloped as a mixed retail/housing scheme.  It should also improve operational efficiency, make revenue savings and deliver an improved service to the public. Herefordshire Council could acquire the existing sites for redevelopment to deliver new homes for the Town. Alternatively, the sites could be sold to a private developer.			Cost	Timescale	Outputs
Demand Analysis	A feasibility study has recently been completed by consultants Jacobs - for land acquisition and development		Estimated £2million	5 years	New joint Police and Fire station  New homes
Potential funding sources	Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, West Mercia Police One Public Estate,				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	New facility to be managed jointly by Police and Fire Service				

Investment Proposal Form			
Project Name: Accessibility: Improved Bus / Car Parking Offer linked to Kington High Street Regeneration			
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities
<p>Description: In order to maintain its role as a service and employment centre in north Herefordshire, Kington has to provide sufficient public transport links and car parking in the right locations and with an affordable and attractive charging regime to attract both visitors and local residents from surrounding villages and towns.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to supplement the Tourism offer and could include a community bus for walkers, as well as improved links to Hay and Hereford.</p> <p>Whilst Kington is well provided with readily available car parking to serve the top end of the High Street there is a strong view from local stakeholders that car parking needs to be improved to support footfall from the lower end of the High Street.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to address this issue by providing more low cost long term car parking on the McCartney's Livestock market site. The introduction of charging points for electric cars will also be important to support carbon reduction and reduce emissions in the town.</p>		Cost	Timescale
		£50,000 Depending on nature of charging and provision (signage)	One to five years
		Some ongoing subsidy will be required for new bus routes or services	New car parking spaces provided  New bus routes/more frequent services
Demand Analysis	Proposed Kington Transport Study, Chamber of Trade		
Potential funding sources	External bids including Levelling Up Fund		

Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Herefordshire Marches AONB				
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities	
<p>Description: Natural England has already registered a proposal for an AONB to include Kington and the surrounding area. They are currently will reviewing and prioritising proposals received for new and extended National Parks and AONBs, and new landscape designation approaches. They aim to identify an initial programme of designation priorities which they can begin in 2021/22, the scope of which will be subject to available resources. They have confirmed that they will update proponents, partners and stakeholders on our proposed programme as soon as possible this year.</p> <p>Wider support from key local stakeholders could assist this proposal in coming to fruition.</p>		Cost	Timescale	
		Outputs		
Demand Analysis	Report and proposal developed by CPRE	<p>Approx. £200,000 per annum based on discussions with proposer – revenue projects fund</p>	<p>Up to 5years to establish</p>	
Potential funding sources	Natural England, Central Government,			<p>Increased visitor numbers</p> <p>Enhanced natural and built environment</p>
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	New dedicated entity established to take forward			



Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Visitor Economy- Walking Hub				
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities	
<p>Description Herefordshire’s visitor economy has suffered from a lack of investment and marketing for many years and Kington has been no exception. The new town vision identifies the development of tourism as a key strategic objective.</p> <p>The potential launch of the Herefordshire BID in January 2022 should theoretically address the marketing issue and the repurposing of the town centre would significantly enhance the town’s appeal as a visitor attraction. Kington could also benefit from a county-wide strategy to integrate festivals and events while the regeneration of the High Street would directly address the aspiration to position the town as a gateway for walking and cycling holidays and other rural activities. The main opportunity for the Town is develop itself as a walking centre.</p> <p>Investment is needed in interpretive and promotional material such as a local walking App, signage etc. Investment is also required in the local footpath network.</p>		Cost	Timescale	Outputs
		£50,000 (to ensure accessibility for all)	One year onwards	Increased visitor numbers and tourism spend
Demand Analysis	Significant and well-tested demand for strategic support for Kington’s visitor economy			
Potential funding sources	Central government grant funding. Marches LEP, Herefordshire Destination BID			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	One off initial investment will require some ongoing maintenance			

Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Kington Market Hall				
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities	
<p>Description: Kington Market Hall is the most prominent public building in the town serving as the town's market hall and as a key hub/ focus for the town centre. The proposal is to renovate and refurbish the market hall, Place de Marines and associated buildings including toilets. The core building is a Victorian red brick market hall dating back to 1885.</p> <p>A refurbished building could provide a real focal point for the town centre and could be used to hold a wider range of regular markets as well as other events and activities including craft fairs, events and festivals. The primary focus should be more regular and wide ranging markets etc. There is also an opportunity to include interpretive material about the Town in the form of a large plan in the Places de Marine.</p> <p>Herefordshire Council could consider a Community Asset Transfer of the building to encourage local use and engagement with what is a currently underutilised asset.</p>		Cost	Timescale	Outputs
		£250,000	Up to 5 years	More visitors and local spend
Demand Analysis	Work being undertaken by Town council to confirm demand			
Potential funding sources	Range of external grants and contributions.			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	To pass ownership to Town Council or other local entity			

Project Name: Kington Wesleyan Chapel				
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities	
<p>Description: The former Wesleyan Chapel in Harp Yard is a square, stone building with a hipped corrugated iron roof. The building consists of two storeys and a cellar and associated land. It is thought that Harp Yard was the site at which John Wesley, the great Methodist leader, preached when he visited Kington in August 1746. In 1801. The building and associated land are located in a central position just off the top end of the High Street.</p> <p>The building has been derelict for a number of years and has been in a number of different ownerships but no viable scheme has yet come forward. The building and associated site have the potential to be converted into a number of commercial, office, residential or other uses.</p>		Cost	Timescale	Outputs
Demand Analysis	Work being undertaken by private owners to confirm demand	Up to £2million Depending on scheme	Up to 5 years	More visitors and local spend
Potential funding sources	Private sector, Heritage Lottery plus range of external grants			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	To stay in private ownership			

Project Name: Kington lighting and banners scheme								
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities					
Description: The proposal is to purchase and install multi-purpose brackets, light fittings and seasonal decorations in key locations in and around Kington High Street. Once installed the brackets/fittings can be used to light and decorate the Town as appropriate during key activities and events throughout the year. The fittings will be multi-purpose to allow bunting, flags, banners and Christmas lighting to be added to the streetscape to make the Town more attractive as well as to help promote key events and other activities.			Cost	Timescale	Outputs			
			Demand Analysis	Work being undertaken by Town Council to confirm demand		£50,000	1 year	More visitors and local spend
			Potential funding sources	Kington Town Council, plus range of external grants and possible section 106 funding				
			Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Town Council or other local entity to maintain				

### Next Steps

This is one of five Market Town Economic Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council for each of Herefordshire's market towns.

Herefordshire Council has identified a number of projects which could be funded by them. As a result, in addition to this Market Town Investment Plan, Rose Regeneration has completed outline business cases (OBCs) and Project Mandates for the following projects for the Council's consideration.

- OBC's have been developed and submitted for:
- New Employment Site Project/ Extension to Hatton Gardens
- Project Mandates have been developed and submitted for:
- Kington High Street Regeneration and Shop Front Grant Schemes

Once the Plans, OBC's and Project Mandates have been considered by Herefordshire Council it is recommended that the council works with the five Market Town Councils to establish an appropriate delivery mechanism to oversee, secure funding for and monitor the delivery of the Market Town Economic Investment Plans. This delivery mechanism should be led and supported by Herefordshire Council and should involve representatives from each Town Council.

# APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

National context	Regional Context	Herefordshire Context	Kington Context
<p>Industrial Strategy – ‘places’ foundation: tackling entrenched regional disparities.</p> <p>Industrial Strategy Productivity Evidence Review – some cities and rural county areas have been falling behind, including Herefordshire. County Councils Network analysis of GVA in 36 county areas found Herefordshire to be experiencing the smallest economic growth 5.3% between 2014 and 2018).</p> <p>A low carbon future in a changing climate – UK obligations under the 2015 Paris Agreement - setting a net zero target for carbon emissions by 2050.</p> <p>HM Treasury/Government department resources - levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people.</p> <p>Build Better, Build Greener, Build Faster - reforming the planning system (NPPF, Planning for the Future White Paper) to give more emphasis to quality, design and the environment.</p> <p>COVID-19 recovery measures - protecting and restoring livelihoods, improving living standards and new economic opportunities.</p>	<p>Local Industrial Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan – inclusive growth, connectivity, skills, enterprise and innovation, trade and investment. Herefordshire’s sectoral specialisms: food and drink, education, advanced manufacturing and engineering, defence and construction. Growth opportunities for (i) manufacturing and engineering, (ii) food supply chain/agri-tech innovation, and (iii) cyber security and resilience.</p> <p>Skills Plan and Skills Sectors Deep Dives – the provision of Higher Education provision and Further Education courses relevant to these growth opportunities in Herefordshire.</p> <p>Cyber Resilience Alliance / Science and Innovation Audit – the largest cluster of cyber security activity outside of London: growth in direct jobs, wider investment in products and processes and acting as a regional testbed.</p> <p>Growth Hub and Enterprise Zone with specialisms in defence and security at Skylon Park, Hereford.</p> <p>Economic recovery plan – investment in infrastructure and jobs: Hereford city streetscape improvements and NMITE Skylon campus development.</p>	<p>Herefordshire is a cold spot for social mobility – it is in the bottom 20 list of Local Authorities in England in terms of the chances that disadvantaged children will do well at school and get a good job.</p> <p>The importance of creating high-quality, highly skilled jobs against a backdrop of traditional low-skill, low-wage economy.</p> <p>County Plan – improving sustainability, connectivity, wellbeing and becoming carbon neutral by 2030-2031: Talk Community (hubs), community wealth building (increasing the amount of money that stays in the local economy); and Sustainable Food County (a whole system approach to tackling obesity, diet related ill health, food poverty, waste and climate change).</p> <p>Hereford Town Investment Plan – intended to deliver urban regeneration, a stronger skills base, and improved connectivity in the city. Under the strapline ‘green and fair’ the TIP recognises Hereford’s connectivity to market towns and countryside (e.g. tourism – attract and disperse approach). Telling stories about place, identifying and implementing a vision, strong partnership working and securing funding/investment are all needed for pandemic Recovery and Transformation.</p> <p>Skylon Park – Enterprise Zone for defence and security, advanced manufacturing, food and drink processing and sustainable technologies. Local Development Order to simplify planning arrangements. Weaving old industrial landscape with future proofing to allow for growth and change. Intended to act as a catalyst for economic growth across Herefordshire.</p> <p>Hereford Transport Strategy describes tragic flows, delays and congestion schemes which increase physical activity (e.g. cycling, walking) generate high value-for-money.</p>	<p>Herefordshire’s Economic Vision – enabling market towns to maximise their role in building thriving, distinctive, service centres that support their communities and rural hinterlands is a countywide ambition.</p> <p>Place-shaping for Kington is focused upon ‘the creation of new homes, new employment opportunities, delivery of and access to services, including affordable housing, reducing the need to travel to other centres, and utilising the natural and historic environment as economic assets’.</p> <p>Kington has more self-employed people and more people working in agriculture, construction, transport, accommodation and skilled trades compared to the rest of Herefordshire. The Kington Area Neighbourhood Plan supports better use of existing industrial estates and small-scale new build or the conversion of buildings to business use.</p> <p>Kington is described as ‘a centre for walkers’ and has Walkers are Welcome status. The KANP focuses on extending the variety, choice and quality of shops and services so as to improve the overall attractiveness of the town centre for residents, businesses and visitors.</p> <p>Kington sits in an area which is seen as a candidate for being designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)</p>

## APPENDIX 2 – PROJECT PRIORITISATION

A detailed project scoring matrix showing the working for the prioritisation process is set out below:

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
Shop/Building Frontage Scheme - Kington	Commercial Development	A public sector grant scheme is proposed to encourage investment in the frontages of shops and other town centre buildings to make the town a place to visit and spend time in. Elsewhere in the country grant schemes have been successfully used to encourage property owners to invest in town centre properties.	£75	3	5	5	4	3	2	3	3	70%
Kington High Street Regeneration	Public Realm	The main shopping street in Kington is narrow making it difficult to visit, shop and spend time in the town centre. The proposal is that the High Street should be refurbished to make it more pedestrian friendly whilst maintaining vehicle access throughout the day.	£2,000	3	5	5	4	0	2	4	4	67.5%
Tourism Offer/Walking Hub	Tourism	Kington's role as a significant walking Centre with a strong crafts sector should be promoted and developed. Investment is proposed in the local footpath network as well as in interpretation material, signage with a focus on walking and possibly crafts and the development of walking App for use on smart phones.	£50	5	5	3	3	2	2	3	3	65%
Kington Market Hall and surrounds	Commercial Development	The proposal is to renovate/refurbish Kington Market Hall and surrounding area and to utilise the market hall as a focus for crafts, events / festivals, café etc. There is also an opportunity to add more interpretative material about the town to promote its key attractions including the walking routes.	£250	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	3	65%
Hatton Gardens Extension – Kington	Employment Space	There is the opportunity to explore a small extension to the existing Hatton gardens Industrial Estate. A range of small-scale employment uses and start up units could be accommodated on the site.	£1,000	3	5	5	4	3	2	2	2	65%

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
Kington lighting and banners scheme	Public Realm	This project aims to light up key elements of the Town throughout the year and at the same time make a significant improvement to the Christmas lights. It will ensure key buildings and streets are lit and or decorated with banners etc to support key events and activities including walking and crafts.	£50	5	5	4	2	3	2	2	2	62.5%
AONB Status - Kington	Green Infrastructure/Tourism	The proposal is to include Kington and surrounding area in England and Wales in the designation of a new AONB. Such a designation will significantly enhance the profile of Kington as a walking town.	£200	4	5	2	3	2	2	3	3	60%
Improved Car parking offer - Kington	Public Realm	A full review of the location, quantity and demand for carparking in the town is required to consider improved car parking to serve the southern end of the Town. The current Livestock Market site provides an opportunity to improve car parking in the Town.	£50	4	5	3	3	0	2	3	4	60%
Food and Drink Offer	Commercial Development	Kington and the surrounding villages home to a number of food and drink manufacturing businesses which would support the development of the town's visitor economy. A small-scale food and drink manufacturer such as a brewery/distillery and associated visitor facility in the Town could attract significant additional footfall to the Town. There are also a number of old and rundown pubs/former pubs in the town which would benefit from refurbishment and could be used to further improve the existing food and drink offer.	£1,000	4	5	3	3	3	2	2	2	60%
Wesleyan Chapel - Kington	Commercial Development	This iconic listed building is in a key location near to the hub of the town centre. The building is in disrepair and needs significant investment it has potential for a range of uses. It has just changed ownership and the new owners should be supported in reviewing the future of the building.	£2,000	3	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	52.5%

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
Kington Police and Fire Station relocation and redevelopment	Housing	There is an opportunity to relocate the Police and Fire Stations from their current location in Churchill Road to provide new modern facilities with lower maintenance costs, better access and potentially faster response times. This could also allow the existing sites to be redeveloped for housing.	£2,000	3	0	2	2	0	5	4	3	47.5%



## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

Please read EIA guidelines when completing this form

### 1. Name of Service Area/Directorate

<b>Name of Head of Service for area being assessed</b>	Roger Allonby
<b>Directorate</b>	Economy and place

<b>Individual(s) completing this assessment</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
	Rob Ewing	Programme Manager
<b>Date assessment completed</b>	10/09/2021	

### 2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, document, service redesign, strategy etc.)	Market Town Investment Plans (MTIPs)	
What is the aim, purpose and/or intended outcomes of this activity?	Economic development of market towns	
Name of lead for activity	Roger Allonby	
Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Service Users <input type="checkbox"/> Patients <input type="checkbox"/> Carers <input type="checkbox"/> Visitors	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Communities <input type="checkbox"/> Other Local businesses and their employees
Is this:	<input type="checkbox"/> Review of an existing activity <input type="checkbox"/> New activity <input type="checkbox"/> Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?	
What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name sources, eg demographic information for services/staff groups affected, complaints etc.)	Detailed stakeholder engagement in collaboration with Herefordshire Council and the Town Councils Indices of deprivation Review of strategies and policies and impact on each market town More detailed consultation will take place for each project during planning	
Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who and how have you engaged with, or why do you believe this is not required)	Town Zoom meetings – wide range of stakeholders Written to each stakeholder Thematic stakeholder groups Young people’s focus group Team Leominster	
Summary of relevant findings	For each town – series of projects that will improve the local economy and improve opportunities	

	An equality impact assessment will be carried out for each potential project
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------

### 3. The impact of this activity

Please consider the potential impact of this activity (during development and implementation) on each of the equality groups outlined below. **Please tick one or more impact box below for each Equality Group and explain your rationale.** Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group and this should be recorded. Remember to consider the impact on staff, public, patients, carers etc. in these equality groups.

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Please explain your reasons for any potential positive, neutral or negative impact identified
Age	x			Kington High Street regeneration will make the High Street more accessible
Disability				Kington High Street regeneration will make the High Street more accessible
Gender Reassignment		x		
Marriage & Civil Partnerships		x		
Pregnancy & Maternity	x			Kington High Street regeneration will make the High Street more accessible
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)		X		
Religion & Belief		X		
Sex		X		
Sexual Orientation		X		
Other Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups (eg. carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation, etc)		X		
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from the unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions within societies)	x			Improving economic recovery post-Covid will increase job opportunities in the market towns

What actions will you take to mitigate any potential negative impacts?	Risk identified	Actions required to reduce/ eliminate negative impact	Who will lead on the action?	Timeframe
	Group not consulted	Identify any additional consultees	RR	
	Project risk	Ensure EIA carried out during detailed project development	RA	
	Programme risk	Continue consultation during project development	RA	

### 4. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?	The output from the market town investment plan project is a set of economic development strategies, one for each market town. Each strategy has identified a set of potential projects that will support the economic development of the market town. The projects have been identified and specified in the strategies but will only be commissioned once the feasibility is established and suitable funding has been identified.
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	A specific EIA will be developed for all commissioned projects. These project specific EIAs will identify the monitoring requirements for the project.
<b>When will you review this EIA?</b> (eg in a service redesign, this EIA should be revisited regularly throughout the design & implementation)	A process will be put in place to ensure that the MTIPs are kept up to date. This process will include the objective of reviewing the EIA for each MTIP and ensuring that EIAs are carried out for each commissioned project.

## 5. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to set out arrangements to assess and consult on how their policies and functions impact on the 9 protected characteristics.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, and population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.
- All staff are expected to deliver services and provide services and care in a manner which respects the individuality of service users, patients, carers etc, and as such treat them and members of the workforce respectfully, paying due regard to the 9 protected characteristics.

<b>Signature of person completing EIA</b>	Rob Ewing
<b>Date signed</b>	10.09.2021



# Title of report: Delivery Plan 2022/23

**Meeting: Cabinet**

**Meeting date: Thursday 31 March 2022**

**Report by: Cabinet member finance, corporate services and planning;**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Key

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

To agree proposals for the Delivery Plan 2022/23. Each year Cabinet is required to produce a delivery plan which sets out how the strategic ambitions within the council's County Plan 2020-24 will be delivered and monitored.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) **Cabinet approves the Delivery Plan, as set out in appendix A.**

## **Alternative options**

1. Cabinet may choose to make amendments to the current proposals. It is open to Cabinet to recommend alternatives to the projects and initiatives and associated measures identified in the delivery plan. Any alternatives would need to be in line with the County Plan 2020-24 priorities and agreed within.

## **Key considerations**

2. The County Plan 2020-24, alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy, provides the overarching policy framework within which decisions will be taken and resources allocated over the next four years.

3. The County Plan 2020-24 was developed through a process of engagement and consultation with the public and key stakeholders and was agreed at Council on 14 February 2020. It sets out the key strategic ambitions for the county and the success measures which will be used to monitor progress.
4. The Delivery Plan, at appendix A, identifies the key programmes of work that will progress the ambitions within the County Plan, set against the ambitions of Economy, Community and Environment. Each of the projects and deliverables contributes to one, if not more of the objectives set in the County Plan. A document, at appendix B, identifies the read across from the County Plan ambition statements, through to the in-year activities, as well as the outcomes and outputs which will be used to measure their effectiveness.
5. This Delivery Plan includes some key deliverables of note, including;
  - The response to the climate emergency which will further reduce both the council's and the county's carbon footprint
  - Safeguarding improvements, as part of the Children's Services Improvement Plan
  - Investment in our towns and city-centre, supporting economic growth as well as tourism
  - The city master-planning work to co-ordinate development and infrastructure within the city and support active travel measures
  - The development of a council owned care home facility
6. As laid out in the Performance Management Framework ([here](#)), the Delivery Plan focusses on the key transformational pieces of work for the council. Underpinning the council's Delivery Plan, council services are required to produce service business plans. These service business plans include a range of additional service improvements which will be undertaken during the 2022/23 year.
7. This Delivery Plan will form the basis of performance reporting each quarter to Cabinet, alongside financial and risk reporting. The performance metrics which should demonstrate the impact and progress made as a result of the activities are found in appendix B. This appendix also shows the alignment between the activities of the plan and the ambition statements of the County Plan.
8. The Corporate Project Management Office team ensure a consistent delivery framework for elements of the Delivery Plan activities, particularly the capital programme. The framework includes process, guidance, support and assurance to senior management and stakeholders ensuring that the council's standards are upheld and clearly defined throughout the development and delivery of projects.

## **Community impact**

9. The County Plan 2020-24 and supporting Delivery Plan, take into account the key characteristics of Herefordshire, as outlined in Understanding Herefordshire (the council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – 2018 version available [here](#)). Factors such as Herefordshire's rurality, the aging population profile and social mobility for our young people, all have impacts on individuals, our communities and provide challenges for service delivery. These challenges are recognised and are the key drivers at the heart of the County Plan 2020-24 and associated Delivery Plan.
10. As part of the County Plan 2020-24, one of the three strategic ambitions is to "strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together"; this Delivery Plan identifies the key programmes of work which will develop this ambition over the next 12 months.

11. Talk Community is the council's strategic approach to developing our partnership with communities and the business sector. The delivery plan sets out a number of key projects and initiatives that builds on and strengthens support at a local level. These include the development of a network of community hubs including larger hubs that will bring together services and support that meet the needs of the local community.
12. Talk Community also provides a critical operational response during times of crisis, this has been clearly demonstrated during the floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. Work detailed in the Delivery Plan sets out our work to increase the number of volunteers to ensure community resilience and also the support to bring funding into the county for the voluntary sector.

## **Environmental Impact**

16. This Delivery Plan sets out a significant number of projects and programmes which deliver against the council's environmental ambitions as identified in the County Plan. These include;
  - The climate emergency action plan
  - The activity resultant from the citizen's climate assembly
  - The delivery of the council's new Waste Strategy, collection and disposal services
  - Construction of Integrated Wetlands
17. Individual projects within this Delivery Plan are all subject to individual decisions, meaning that the environmental impact will be considered in all work.

## **Equality duty**

18. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
16. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As part of the decision making process, individual directorates and service areas must assess the potential of any proposed project, leading to fairer, transparent and informed decisions being made.

## **Resource implications**

17. The recommendation of this report has no direct financial implications. Each individual project will detail the budget available as part of their individual decision papers and the resource to deliver the schemes detailed in the plan are built in to the 2022/23 budget agreed at full Council on 10 February 2022.

## Legal implications

18. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation set out in this report. The legal implications of any decisions to be taken by the Cabinet in implementing Delivery Plan will be detailed and considered in each separate decision report for that project. The Delivery Plan is a strategic document setting out the intended activities to implement the County Plan 2020-24 in 2022/23. .

## Risk management

19. The County Plan 2020-24 and associated Delivery Plan are integral elements of the council's performance management framework. Risks associated with objectives and projects are entered onto the relevant project and/or service risk registers and escalated as appropriate. The corporate risk register is a living document and reviewed regularly by Management Board, Cabinet and Audit and Governance Committee.
20. Whilst COVID-19 does not appear to be a current concern, any further outbreaks or lockdowns could severely impact the council's ability to deliver elements within the delivery plan, to the current timetable.

## Consultees

21. The County Plan 2020-24 was developed following an extensive consultation process with the public and key stakeholders. The County Plan 2020-24 was also reviewed by scrutiny committees, Group Leaders and full Council as part of the developments and approval processes.
22. Whilst this Delivery Plan has not been subject to consultation as the plan is setting out how the County Plan 2020-24 ambitions, which have been consulted on, will be delivered and the budget for 2022/23 has also been subject to consultation. The projects identified within the Delivery Plan will be subject to their own decision making processes which may require consultation.

## Appendices

- Appendix A Delivery Plan 2022/23  
Appendix B Delivery Plan – County Plan alignment and Performance Measures

## Background papers

None

## Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

**Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published**

Governance Sarah Buffrey Date 01/03/2022



Finance	Louise Devlin	Date 01/03/2022
Legal	Alice McAlpine	Date 01/03/2022
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 01/03/2022
Equality Duty	Carol Trachonitis	Date 01/03/2022
Procurement	Lee Robertson	Date 01/03/2022
Risk	Kevin Lloyd	Date 04/03/2022

Approved by [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) Date [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)



# Respecting our past, shaping our future

2022-23

223



## OUR DELIVERY PLAN

# Priorities for 2022/23

This document highlights the key activity planned for 2022-23 financial year in meeting the ambitions set out in the County Plan 2020-24.

The council is setting in motion activity now that will have long-term benefits for the future of Herefordshire in supporting our economy, our communities and our environment.

The Covid pandemic has provided a powerful reminder of the importance of frontline services and the council's central role in supporting communities. It also confirmed the power of working together to address key issues and in making improvements to people's lives.

We are realistic about the scale of the challenge - the loss of government funding, rising costs and changing demands means facing tough choices about where to focus resources. Our day to day services are important in making it possible for residents to get on with their everyday lives, for businesses to thrive, and provide support to people at different stages of their lives.

This delivery plan focuses on commitments beyond the day to day services to show how the council will progress its priorities in meeting our vision to...

*Improve the sustainability, connectivity and wellbeing of our county by strengthening our communities, by creating a thriving local economy and by protecting and enhancing our environment*

## Wellbeing

- We will nurture **children in our care**, provide support for families as soon as they need it, and help young people to meet their potential through education and training.
- We will instigate new ways of providing **care of older people**, including progressing the council's own care facility.
- We will aim to reduce **inequalities** in our county, including access to a network of Talk Community Hubs and libraries.

## Sustainability

- We will respond to the **climate and ecological emergency** including tackling pollution and will protect the countryside, all of which will improve quality of life for all.
- We will invest in new **housing** for people that is affordable and environmentally sustainable.
- We will reduce the amount of **waste** generated in the county, change how it is collected and increase reuse and recycling.
- We will involve more people in planning for the county's future as we update the **core strategy** planning policy framework.

## Connectivity

- We will boost different **travel choices** through new walking and cycling routes and widen other transport options whilst creating a long term travel plan for the county.
- We will continue to extend digital connection for households and businesses, and make the most of **digital technology** to improve service delivery options.
- We will support businesses and skills development to aid economic growth, along with investing in our **town and city centres** and promoting the county as a vibrant place to live, work and visit.



# Highlights of 2021-22



46 Talk Community Hubs open, and Talk Community kitchen providing healthy meals.



Shell Store opened with 2,000 sq metres of space for new and growing businesses.



Over 93% of premises with access to superfast broadband.



Over 91,000 journeys on Hereford Beryl Bike Scheme, covering more than 220,000kms.



New student accommodation at Station Approach in Hereford with 178 rooms.



Distribution of £46m to businesses to address effects of Covid and £8m for social care provision.

225



Brush, Book, Bed! promoting oral health for under 5s as part of a daily bedtime routine with baby pack from libraries.



9,774 free swimming sessions for children and young people; 2,740 free gym membership for students in years 11,12 and 13.



Beacons College opened as new special needs school in Hereford.



Over 58,000 Shop local cards issued benefiting over 1,500 businesses.



219,196 Covid home test kits distributed and c6,500 contact tracing cases completed by the council.



More than 62,000 free journeys at weekends with many new routes.

# During 2021-22, we did...



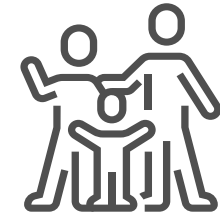
In 2021 over **2,700** children attended the Holiday Activity Fund projects



**3,197** planning applications determined



**4,441k** new library members  
**80k** eBooks and eAudio books issued



**1,000** children in need and their families supported



**910** fly tips removed  
**57** graffiti removals

**11,000** households support with the council tax reduction scheme



**61,729** calls to the contact centre, average answering time 48 second.

**27** public rights of way footpath schemes completed



**4,054** additional calls on the Covid 19 helpline.

**41,000** repairs on the roads, footways and public spaces of Herefordshire

**21,000** pot holes repaired



**200** community leaders trained in mental health awareness and first aid.



**£3.196m** on improving school buildings



**5,337** referrals made to Adults Social Care



**3,405** Blue Badge applications issued

# Our Delivery Programme 2022 - 2023

Herefordshire Council delivers a wide variety of services to residents and businesses. The following pages highlight some of the key activity that has taken place since April 2021 and what is planned for the forthcoming financial year in meeting the ambition of the county plan, with reference to the related objectives.

## Council Plan **Environment Objective:** Protect and enhance our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live.

227

Programme	So far we have...	This year we will...
Commissioning of new <b>waste collection and disposal service</b> (supporting objective EN1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produced a new Integrated Waste Strategy to meet ambitious waste reduction and recycling targets.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a new waste strategy in preparation for collection changes in 2024.</li> <li>Promote changes to the new collection system for refuse and recycling throughout the year.</li> <li>Run pilot schemes for reusable nappies with 75 families and trial recycling storage options with people living in flats.</li> </ol>
Deliver the <b>Hereford Transport Strategy</b> and <b>City Centre Masterplan</b> (supporting objectives EN2 & EN4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up 4 new car share clubs in Kington, Leominster, Fownhope and South Hereford.</li> <li>Implemented free weekend bus travel scheme and an enhanced Sunday service.</li> <li>Produced a Bus Service Improvement Plan to support a funding bid of £18.1m.</li> <li>Secured £1.49m towards new active travel schemes and eastern road link.</li> <li>Appointed lead on strategic planning for transport.</li> <li>Installed new city trees providing natural filters to reduce air pollution.</li> <li>Extended Hereford's Beryl Bike scheme to 200 pedal bikes and introduced 30 new ebikes.</li> <li>Launched a new contract to increase electric vehicle charging points.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce the Hereford City Masterplan to support long term planning for transport.</li> <li>Deliver active travel programmes to encourage more walking and cycling along with measures to improve air quality and travel plans with businesses.</li> <li>Install new cycle routes for St Owen's Street and on Aylestone Hill in Hereford.</li> <li>Complete feasibility study of route options for Eastern river crossing.</li> <li>Introduce an additional 70 ebikes as part of the Beryl Bike scheme.</li> <li>Consult on design options for the city Transport Hub.</li> <li>Complete design for Holme Lacy Road improvements.</li> <li>Commence construction of Hereford Enterprise Zone Quiet Route.</li> <li>Expand the county's electric vehicle charging point network (100 new points planned by 2025).</li> </ol>

Programme	So far we have...	This year we will...
Address the <b>climate and ecological emergency</b> in the county (supporting objectives EN3 EN4, EN6 & EN7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established a countywide climate and nature partnership.</li> <li>Engaged residents in a citizens' climate assembly and allocated £1.33m to the climate reserve to deliver new initiatives.</li> <li>Drafted supplementary guidance on Environmental Building Standards for consultation.</li> <li>Grant funded 100 properties with first-time central heating schemes.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Run a Greener Footprints campaign to raise awareness of the actions households can take to address climate change.</li> <li>Respond to the citizens' climate assembly recommendations and agree a funded programme working with partner organisations.</li> <li>Seek resources for a countywide domestic energy retrofit programme, and deliver a domestic energy efficiency and renewable heating retrofit programme to support 150 homes.</li> <li>Provide free and impartial home energy advice to 1,000 households through the Keep Herefordshire Warm service.</li> <li>Construct our first integrated wetland to reduce levels of phosphate pollution entering the Special Area of Conservation.</li> <li>Adopt a new nature strategy for the county.</li> </ol>
Deliver initiatives to <b>reduce the council's carbon footprint</b> (supporting objectives EN5 & EN7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed energy performance surveys of the tenanted properties of the council.</li> <li>Established an energy improvement programme.</li> <li>Reduced the council's carbon footprint by 59.6% from baseline of 2008/9.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install new energy efficiency measures at 4 council buildings supported by the Sustainable Energy in Public Buildings projects.</li> <li>Develop a new 3 year decarbonisation programme for school buildings. Including delivery of energy audits at 20 schools and installation of solar PV systems at 2 schools.</li> <li>Deliver the highway biodiversity net gain project.</li> <li>Improve the environmental and energy efficiency standards of Council buildings through the introduction of new minimum standards for energy efficiency, developing a plan for investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy measures for existing buildings for consideration in future budget requests, and a plan for achieving net zero carbon for all new-build council buildings.</li> </ol>
Update <b>planning policy</b> for the council (supporting objective EN0)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioned a needs assessment and public consultation started to meet regulation 18.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete 3 key consultations to progress production of the updated Core Strategy.</li> <li>Deliver full draft of the Core Strategy Update ready for pre-examination public consultation (Regulation 19).</li> <li>Implement the new supplementary planning documents for Agriculture and Planning and Environmental Building Standards.</li> <li>Progress the Minerals and Waste policy through examination to adoption.</li> </ol>



# Council Plan **Community Objective:** Strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safe together.

229

Programme	So far we have...	This year we will...
<p>Improve the <b>health and wellbeing of children</b> (supporting objective CO1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided free gym and swimming lessons for children.</li> <li>• 14 enhanced play areas supported by Covid recovery grant.</li> <li>• Introduced new Universal Public Health nursing visits for 4-6 month olds.</li> <li>• Introduced an on-line oral health training package reaching 177 professionals and parents.</li> <li>• Launched a new campaign to improve young children's oral health based on 'Brush, Book, Bed' with packs from libraries and supervised tooth brushing in children's settings.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use the Improvement Plan to work more closely with partners, and agree a common understanding of a Child Friendly County.</li> <li>2. Strengthen the role of children's centres and early years in prevention, with more families aware of the services they are entitled to and be connected to more opportunities within their community.</li> <li>3. Run training programmes for 200 staff on oral health.</li> <li>4. Deliver a training programme of road safety including pedestrian training for school pupils.</li> </ol>
<p>Deliver <b>schools investment</b> programme (supporting objective CO1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed Marlbrook School extension.</li> <li>• Created new drop-off area at Mordiford School.</li> <li>• Opened a new special needs sixth form in Hereford at Beacon College.</li> <li>• Completed 16 feasibility studies to inform key investment priorities for schools.</li> <li>• Built a new science block at John Kyrle High School adding extra school places in Ross-on-Wye.</li> <li>• Obtained planning permission for development at The Brookfield School.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tender construction of new school building at Peterchurch Primary School.</li> <li>2. Tender refurbishment and expansion of The Brookfield School.</li> <li>3. Plan and agree first phase of school expansions to deliver additional school places across the county.</li> <li>4. Seek approval for the rebuild of Westfield School and move to the design stage.</li> <li>5. Conduct feasibility work to inform plans to increase capacity at Hereford Pupil Referral Service and Blackmarston School.</li> </ol>

Programme	So far we have...	This year we will...
<b>School Improvement</b> to support young people to learn (supporting objective CO1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported schools to be open and operating through Covid-19 restrictions.</li> <li>Embedded and maintained an online learning offer through 2020-2022.</li> <li>Provided support in the distribution of lap-tops to children.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all schools have better informed pupil's mental health and wellbeing support via a training and development package.</li> <li>Develop a range of traded services to support increase in number of schools who operate as academies.</li> <li>Improve the educational outcomes for those pupils with Education and Health Care plans.</li> </ol>
All children known to the <b>safeguarding</b> services receive the best possible service (supporting objectives CO1 & CO2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renewed Children's Improvement Plan.</li> <li>Revised Quality Assurance Framework and Practice Standards.</li> <li>Audited current children social worker cases.</li> <li>Implemented new scheme of exit and retention interviews to better inform our recruitment and retention strategy.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put in place effective 'Voice of the Child' engagement so children are involved in designing services in a meaningful way.</li> <li>Increase the number of foster carers by 25.</li> <li>Integrate a "Right Help – Right Time" approach within the Talk Community programme, so families are better supported within communities.</li> <li>Improve the range of support for care leavers.</li> <li>Provide more support for the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service.</li> <li>Progress plans to build a children's residential home.</li> <li>Increase the number of social workers with a new retention and recruitment approach.</li> </ol>
Invest in creating affordable net zero carbon <b>housing</b> (supporting objective CO3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed housing delivery model.</li> <li>Identified pipeline of viable sites for housing and commissioned feasibility assessment.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress the delivery of new affordable net zero housing on council owned land.</li> <li>Submit planning applications for 2 housing sites on council land.</li> <li>Support at least 230 additional affordable properties in the county.</li> </ol>
Development of <b>council owned care home</b> to meet future demands (supporting objectives CO4 & CO5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed options appraisal and decision to progress with a council owned care facility.</li> <li>Created a discharge to assess facility at Hillside Care Home including refurbishment and environmental upgrades.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress the building of the council's own care home with site identified, design outlined and planning application developed.</li> <li>Complete site works for Hillside Independent living demonstration centre.</li> </ol>

Programme	So far we have...	This year we will...
Ensuring <b>quality of care</b> and develop <b>technology enabled living</b> (supporting objective CO5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implemented a strengths based and community focussed approach in supporting adults with social care needs and emerging support needs.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create 50 bespoke wellness packages using a technology enabled 'proactive and preventative' care model.</li> <li>Move the existing Telecare Service to a digital delivery model.</li> <li>Create a digital tool and website that shows how technology can support people's independence and aid assessments.</li> <li>Develop and deliver a training programme to support at least 50 staff on the use of technology to support residents.</li> </ol>
Become a <b>Sustainable food</b> county (supporting objectives CO4 & EN3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a sustainable food partnership.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and agree a Food Charter for the county.</li> <li>Submit application for the Sustainable Food Place Bronze award.</li> </ol>
Work to <b>minimise inequalities</b> in our communities (supporting objective CO4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed and implemented a Covid vaccine inequalities programme.</li> <li>Supported more than 11,000 bill payers through the council tax reduction scheme.</li> <li>Supported over 200 individuals via debt, financial and fuel poverty service available in all market towns.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce a Physical Activity Strategy that outlines plans and programmes to aid health through fitness.</li> <li>Offer maximum council tax reduction scheme for eligible pensioners and people of working age.</li> <li>Work with partner organisations to produce a plan to tackle health inequalities and lead health equity audit process for commissioned services.</li> </ol>
Further develop the <b>Talk Community</b> approach (supporting objective CO6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created 46 talk community hubs created.</li> <li>Completed community wellbeing survey.</li> <li>Trained 200 community leaders and volunteers in mental health awareness and first aid.</li> <li>Provided 2,700 children with free holiday activities throughout the school holidays.</li> <li>Established the Talk Community kitchen with healthy meals to the local community.</li> <li>Awarded over £1m to the voluntary and community sector through grants and operation of services</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of Talk Community hubs to 75.</li> <li>Deliver 2 integrated service hubs using existing community facilities that includes working with the whole family.</li> <li>Make investment and improvements to libraries and museums.</li> </ol>

Programme	So far we have...	This year we will...
Deliver improvements in the <b>infrastructure and public realm</b> (supporting objective CO0)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brought back into council-owned operation the Public Rights of Way and Traffic Regulation Order teams.</li> <li>Submitted outline business case for Pontrilas Station to Restoring Your Railways programme.</li> <li>Installed new street furniture in High Town, Hereford.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish and implement plan to improve the Public Rights of Way Service by working in partnership with volunteers, communities and parishes.</li> <li>Develop 20mph speed limit policy and programme for the county to cover significant villages and market towns.</li> <li>Install 20mph limits in Presteigne and Cusop, as part of the 1st year of 5 year 20mph speed limit programme.</li> <li>Enhance the Cathedral and River Wye quarters of the city.</li> <li>Make Improvements to the city street scene in Widemarsh Street and High Town in Hereford.</li> </ol>
<b>Council modernisation</b> programme (supporting objectives CO0 & CO4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed modernisation and transformation programme, with resources and aligned budgets.</li> <li>Increased the role of Hoople as a jointly owned company for building maintenance and cleaning.</li> <li>Creation of a programme management office to support delivery of projects and schemes.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out and embed hybrid working model for employees, creating effective flexible working arrangements.</li> <li>Develop and implement updated Digital Strategy for improved customer experience, communication and connectivity.</li> <li>Establish a “spirit of Herefordshire” approach to attracting and retaining workforce through celebrating the positives of the county.</li> <li>Work with NHS and Public Health partners to implement the Integrated Care System approach agreed for Herefordshire &amp; Worcestershire.</li> <li>Establish Hoople Care to deliver care services for the council.</li> </ol>
Management of the <b>council's assets</b> to maximise their use (supporting objective CO0)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Placed operation of Maylord Orchards centre management with Hoople.</li> <li>Moved to increase flexible working in response to Covid 19 and vacated two key buildings creating a revenue saving.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce asset management plans for each council owned property based on up-to-date knowledge of conditions.</li> <li>Plan capital works for the Shirehall to bring back into council and community use.</li> </ol>

# Council Plan **Economy Objective:** Support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources

Programme	So far we have...	This year we will...
Develop the <b>2050 Economic Big Plan</b> (supporting objective EC1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Held Economic Summit in Hereford, along with a series of mini Economic Summits in all market towns.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with stakeholders to consult, draft and publish a new economic strategy and UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan to support the continued recovery of the county, leading to longer term accelerated growth and higher value jobs for local people.</li> </ol>
<b>Town Investment Plan</b> for Hereford (supporting objectives EC1 & EC2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted initial business cases for Town Investment funding.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the £22.4m Town Investment funded through the Stronger Towns Fund working closely with partners.</li> <li>Produce and submit detailed proposals for investment in the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery, Maylord Orchard Library and the Learning Resource Centre.</li> <li>Deliver the detailed business case for Greening the City.</li> </ol>
Develop & implement <b>Market Town Economic Development Investment</b> (supporting objectives EC2 & EC5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produced plans for each market town based on public consultation.</li> <li>Awarded grant to market town projects worth £550,000.</li> <li>Made investment in Leominster Heritage Action Zone.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commence implementation of the Market Town Investment Plans, allocating the £20.6m investment to bring forward employment land and to create incubation space for businesses.</li> <li>Pursue potential sites for new commercial employment land uses in market towns.</li> <li>Progress the Leominster Heritage Action Zone Project; including completion of public realm improvements.</li> </ol>
Support <b>economic opportunity</b> through business support (supporting objectives EC2 & EC6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invested £6m in Covid 19 recovery programmes supporting economic and wellbeing support.</li> <li>Introduced the Shop Local Card, so far benefitting over 1,500 shops.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase engagement with the private sector through a Talk Business programme of communications, networking and events including quarterly business briefings and six monthly meetings in the market towns.</li> <li>Increase the level of engagement and quality of support provided through the Marches Growth Hub, with a specific focus on supporting businesses to respond to climate change and reduce their carbon impact.</li> <li>Deliver a business case for the Recovery and Investment Fund to support businesses to expand in Herefordshire.</li> </ol>

233

Programme	So far we have...	This year we will...
Development of the <b>Hereford Enterprise Zone</b> (supporting objective EC2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed 90% of civil works at the North Magazine of the Hereford Enterprise Zone.</li> <li>Opened the Shell Store with 20% of units occupied.</li> <li>Supported the opening of Midlands Centre for Cyber Security.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue sales of council owned land resulting in business growth, private sector investment and creating more and better paid jobs.</li> <li>Complete the North Magazine Civil Works with first plots sold for development.</li> <li>Complete NMITE's Skylon Park campus including the Centre for Advanced Timber Technology and Centre for Automated Manufacturing.</li> </ol>
Work with partners to increase the <b>Skills and Workforce</b> in the county (supporting objective EC3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put in place contracts with 2 Community Renewal Fund projects.</li> <li>Supported the Kickstart scheme launched to support young people into work / apprenticeships.</li> <li>Used Covid 19 recovery funding to support 28 young people most at risk of not being in education, employment and/or training.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the skills and supply chain required to meet the needs of the county, aligned to the Economic Big Plan.</li> <li>Implement a new recruitment platform for council employees, to attract skilled workers to the county.</li> <li>Run a joint marketing campaign with Higher Education providers to attract students to study in the county, including those from the local population.</li> <li>Provide more apprenticeship, supported internship and work experience opportunities, including through the council's direct contracts.</li> <li>Engage with 300 young people via Youth Employment Hub to support 16 to 24 year olds into education, employment and/or training.</li> <li>Agree a new strategic plan and future delivery model for the council's adult and community learning education service.</li> </ol>
Deliver broadband coverage via <b>Fastershire</b> whilst addressing the barriers for people going online (supporting objective EC4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked with suppliers to reach 93.7% of premises with superfast and full fibre broadband.</li> <li>Introduced a new community broadband scheme to connect some of the hardest to reach premises.</li> <li>Secured additional government funding for Project Gigabit support to extend the county's full fibre broadband coverage.</li> <li>Introduced digital household grant and new business broadband programme.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure at least 15 businesses taking up the new business grant, provide new household grants to eligible residents, and at least 100 residents improving their digital skills.</li> <li>Commission Age Concern to deliver support for older people to improve their digital skills, including 288 places for 6 week computer café course, 60 attending 1-2-1 course and 50 tablet loans.</li> <li>Increase superfast and full fibre broadband coverage in the county, and move to new stage of gigabit capable speeds.</li> </ol>

Programme	So far we have...	This year we will...
Support <b>Tourism and Cultural Sector</b> in the county (supporting objective EC5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioned first TV advert for Herefordshire reaching more than 8.3 million people.</li> <li>• Promoted over 450 businesses through new Visit Herefordshire website.</li> <li>• Conducted a ballot on forming a Herefordshire Business Improvement District.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the growth of the tourism industry across Herefordshire, working closely with private sector partners and building on strengths and new opportunities in areas such as accessible and green tourism, creative industries, promotion of the cultural sector, and improving our Public Rights of Way.</li> </ol>

## How we monitor the Plan

The activity detailed in this plan will be managed through a robust approach to project management to ensure visibility of progress, risks and accountability for delivery.

The involvement of residents and stakeholders in the development of services and projects is critical to ensure that we do the right things at the right time and in the right way. This includes in January 2022 running the very first Citizens' Climate Assembly, and continuing to run the parish council summits.

The council has undergone a major review of its governance arrangements, resulting in clarity on how members of the public can be involved in decision making, scrutiny and holding the council to account.

We recognise and value the central role our employees play in delivering this plan and the running of our many statutory services. We will continue to invest in activities that ensures we attract and retain skilled and committed workforce, whilst making the most of working with external partners to share particular expertise to ensure this plan is delivered.

Appendix A of this plan demonstrates how the activity identified in this plan meet the original ambitions from our County Plan. This appendix also identifies the outputs we will monitor to show progress and the high level outcomes which will evidence the success of our County Plan ambitions. These will form the basis of quarterly reporting for 2022/23.

### **Councillor David Hitchiner**

Leader of Herefordshire Council

### **Councillor Liz Harvey**

Deputy Leader of Herefordshire Council / Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services and Planning

### **Councillor Diana Toynbee**

Cabinet Member for Children and Families

### **Councillor Gemma Davies**

Cabinet Member for Commissioning, Procurement and Assets

### **Councillor Ellie Chowns**

Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy

### **Councillor Pauline Crockett**

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

### **Councillor John Harrington**

Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport

### **Councillor Ange Tyler**

Cabinet Member for Housing, Regulatory Services and Community Safety









**ENVIRONMENT:**

ENO - Protect and enhance our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live

**Outcomes****Outputs****2022/23 Planned delivery**

Complete 3 key consultations to progress production of the updated Core Strategy

Deliver full draft of the Core Strategy Update ready for pre-examination public consultation (Regulation 19)

Implement the new Supplementary Planning Documents for Agriculture and Planning and Environmental Building Standards

Progress the Minerals and Waste policy through to examination and adoption.

**ENVIRONMENT:**

EN1 - Minimise waste and increase reuse, repair and recycling

**Outcomes**

Reduce the average kilograms of waste per household (12m rolling average)  
Increase in the percentage of waste sent for recycling (12m rolling average)  
Reduce the percentage of waste sent to landfill (12m rolling average)

**Outputs**

(Reduce) the average kilograms of waste per household (12m rolling average)  
(Increase) the percentage of waste sent for recycling (12m rolling average)  
(Reduce) the percentage of waste sent to landfill (12m rolling average)

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Implement a new waste strategy in preparation for collection changes in 2024.  
Promote changes to the new collection system for refuse and recycling throughout the year  
Run pilot schemes for reusable nappies with 75 families and trial for recycling storage options with people living in flats

**ENVIRONMENT:**

EN2 - Improve and extend active travel options throughout the county

**Outcomes**

Improve average journey time in Hereford during the morning peak  
 Reduction in the Annual Average Daily Traffic flows (in Hereford, and rural)  
 Increase the level of bus patronage  
 Increase the number of cycles journeys made (taken from cycle network)  
 Increase the usage of the councils electric vehicle charging points in Herefordshire

**Outputs**

The total kilometres cycled using Beryl's Bikes  
 The number of children trained through Bikeability  
 Kilometres of new quiet route cycle route within the county (Annual)  
 Kilometres of new segregated cycle route within the county (Annual)  
 The total number new EV charging points  
 The value of investment in sustainable active travel measures

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Produce the Hereford City Masterplan to support long term planning for transport  
 Deliver active travel programmes to encourage more walking and cycling along with measures to improve air quality and travel plans with businesses  
 Instigate new cycle routes for St Owen's Street and on Aylestone Hill in Hereford  
 Complete feasibility study of route options for Eastern river crossing.  
 Introduce an additional 70 ebikes as part of the Beryl Bike scheme  
 Consult on design options for the city Transport Hub  
 Complete design for Holme Lacy Road improvements  
 Commence construction of Hereford Enterprise Zone Quiet Route

**ENVIRONMENT:**

EN3 - Build understanding and support for sustainable living

**Outcomes**

Reduce county carbon emissions (per head of population)

**Outputs**

(Reduce the) kWh in business emissions through the provision of grant assistance from Business Efficiency Programme  
(Increase the) total number of signatories to the Herefordshire Climate and Nature Partnership

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Run a Greener Footprints campaign to raise awareness of the actions households can take to address climate change  
Provide free and impartial home energy advice to 1,000 residents through the Keep Herefordshire Warm service.

**ENVIRONMENT:**

EN4 - Invest in low carbon projects

**Outcomes**

Reduce the county's carbon emissions (per head of population)  
Reduce the number of houses living in fuel poverty

**Outputs**

(Increase) the number of households that have had a significant impact on their carbon footprint as a result of council intervention  
(Increase) the £ and percentage of investment that contributes significantly to climate and nature goals

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Expand the county's electric vehicle charging point network (100 new points planned by 2025)  
Seek resources for a countywide domestic energy retrofit programme, and deliver a domestic energy efficiency and renewable heating retrofit programme to support 150 homes



**ENVIRONMENT:**

EN5 - Identify climate change action in all aspects of council operation

**Outcomes**

Reduce the council's carbon emissions

**Outputs**

(Reduce) the energy consumption across all council operations

(Increase) the KWh saved as a result of capital investment and grants

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Install new energy efficiency measures at 4 council buildings supported by the Sustainable Energy in Public Building projects.

Develop a new 3 year schools decarbonisation programme, including delivery of energy audits at 20 schools and installation of solar PV systems at 2 schools.

Improve the environmental and energy efficiency standards of council buildings through the introduction of new minimum standards for energy efficiency, developing a plan for investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy measures for existing buildings for consideration in future budget requests, and a plan for achieving net zero carbon for all new-build council buildings

**ENVIRONMENT:**

EN6 - Seek strong stewardship of the county's natural resources

**Outcomes**

Increase flood resilience

Reduce levels of phosphate pollution in the county's rivers (measured by the number of rivers meeting phosphate tolerance levels)

Improve the air quality within Herefordshire

**Outputs**

Phosphate reduction as a result of the introduction of new wetlands

The number of properties with a reduced risk of flooding as a result of the council's support and intervention

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Respond to the citizens' climate assembly recommendations and agree a funded programme working with partner organisations

**ENVIRONMENT:**

EN7 - Protect and enhance the county's biodiversity, value nature and uphold environmental standards

**Outcomes**

Increase & protect biodiversity  
Increase tree cover in the county

**Outputs**

(Increase the) percentage of road verges managed for wildlife  
(Increase the) number of trees planted as a result of direct council intervention  
(Increase the) percentage of planning applications submitting a full ecology checklist

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Construct our first integrated wetland to reduce levels of phosphate pollution entering the Special Area of Conservation  
Adopt a new nature strategy for the county  
Deliver the highway biodiversity net gain project

**ECONOMY:**

EC0 - Support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources

**Outcomes****Outputs**

The number of business engaged and supported

The value of grants paid to businesses to support viability, or enable growth

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

**ECONOMY:**

EC1 - Develop environmentally sound infrastructure that attracts investment

**Outcomes**

Increase the Gross Value Added per head of population for Herefordshire  
Reduce county carbon emissions (per head of population)

**Outputs**

The value of investment made by the Herefordshire Council in environmentally sound infrastructure and directly leveraged by third parties (£106 for example).

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Work with stakeholders to consult, draft and publish a new economic strategy and UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan to support the continued recovery of the county, leading to longer term accelerated growth and higher value jobs for local people  
Deliver the detailed business case for Greening the City

**ECONOMY:**

EC2 - Use council land to create economic opportunities and bring higher paid jobs to the county

**Outcomes**

Increase the average workplace earnings in Herefordshire  
Maintain low unemployment in all areas of the county  
Increase the gross value added per head of population in Herefordshire

**Outputs**

The money invested and leveraged (both public and private) by council to create economic opportunities  
The number of jobs created (directly and indirectly) as a result of council investment

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Work with partners to implement the £22.4m Town Investment funded through the Stronger Towns Fund  
Produce and submit detailed proposals for investment in the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery, Maylord Orchard Library and the Learning Resource Centre  
Commence implementation of the Market Town Investment Plans, allocating the £20.6m investment to bring forward employment Land and to create incubation space for businesses  
Pursue potential sites for new commercial employment land uses in market towns.  
Increase engagement with the private sector through a Talk Business programme of communications, networking and events including quarterly business briefings and six monthly meetings in the market towns  
Increase the level of engagement and quality of support provided through the Marches Growth Hub, with a specific focus on supporting businesses to respond to climate change and reduce their carbon impact  
Continue sales of council owned land resulting in business growth, private sector investment and creating more and better paid jobs  
Complete North Magazine Civil Works with first plots sold for development  
Complete NMITE's Skylon Park campus including the Centre for Advanced Timber Technology and Centre for Automated Manufacturing

**ECONOMY:**

EC3 - Invest in education and the skills needed by employers

**Outcomes**

Increase the percentage of residents with skills at NVQ level 4 and above  
Reduce the percentage of the population with no qualifications

**Outputs**

The number of Higher Education students  
The percentage qualification achievement rate of provision of Higher Education  
The number of adult and community learning students  
The percentage qualification achievement rate of adult and community learning  
The number of apprenticeships and job placements  
The percentage qualification achievement rate of apprenticeships  
The number of 18-24 year olds in receipt of unemployment related benefits (claimant count)  
The percentage of apprenticeship levy spent

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Review the skills and supply chain required to meet the needs of the county, aligned to the Economic Big Plan  
Implement a new recruitment platform for council employees, to attract skilled workers to the county  
Run a joint marketing campaign with Higher Education providers to attract students to study in the county, including those from the local population.  
Provide more apprenticeship, supported internship and work experience opportunities, including through the council's direct contracts  
Engage with 300 young people via Youth Employment Hub to support 16 to 24 year olds into education, employment and/or training  
Agree a new strategic plan and future delivery model for the council's adult and community learning education service

**ECONOMY:**

EC4 - Enhance digital connectivity for communities and business

**Outcomes**

Increase the percentage of people in Herefordshire using the internet

**Outputs**

The percentage of premises in Herefordshire able to access a superfast broadband service

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Secure at least 15 businesses taking up the new business grant, provide new household grants to eligible residents, and at least 100 residents improving their digital skills

Commission Age Concern to deliver support older people to improve their digital skills. Including 288 places for 6 week computer café course, 60 attending 1-2-1 course and 50 tablet loans

Increase superfast and full fibre broadband coverage in the county, and move to new stage of gigabit capable speeds



**ECONOMY:**

EC5 - Protect and promote our heritage, culture and natural beauty to enhance quality of life and support tourism

**Outcomes**

Increase the number of visitors to the county  
Increase the quality of life of Herefordshire residents  
Increase the money (£) spent by visitors to the county

**Outputs**

The number of unique visits to [www.visitherefordshire.co.uk](http://www.visitherefordshire.co.uk)  
The number of people reached by tourism marketing

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Progress the Leominster Heritage Action Zone Project; including completion of public realm improvements  
Support the growth of the tourism industry across Herefordshire, working closely with private sector partners and building on strengths and new opportunities in areas such as accessible and green tourism, creative industries, promotion of the cultural sector, and improving our Public Rights of Way

**ECONOMY:**

EC6 - Spend public money in the local economy wherever possible

**Outcomes**

Increase the Gross Value Added per head of population in Herefordshire

**Outputs**

The social value attributable to council procurement

The percentage of the council procurement budget spent locally

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Deliver a business case for the Recovery and Investment Fund to support businesses to expand in Herefordshire

**COMMUNITY:**

COO - Strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together

**Outcomes**

Percentage of A, B, C & U roads classified as in need of repair

**Outputs**

Percentage of Category 1 defects managed within timescale  
 The percentage of overall condition of footways rated as good  
 Percentage of Category 2a defects managed within timescale  
 Percentage of construction materials reused and recycled

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Publish and implement plan to improve the Public Rights of Way Service by working in partnership with volunteers, communities and parishes.  
 Develop 20mph speed limit policy and programme for the county to cover significant villages and market towns.  
 Install 20mph limits in Presteigne and Cusop, as part of the 1st year of 5 year 20mph speed limit programme.  
 Enhance the Cathedral and River Wye quarters of the city  
 Make Improvements to the city street scene in Widemarsh Street and High Town in Hereford  
 Roll out and embed hybrid operational working model for employees, creating effective flexible working arrangements.  
 Develop and implement updated Digital Strategy for improved customer experience, communication and connectivity.  
 Establish a “spirit of Herefordshire” approach to attracting and retaining workforce through celebrating the positives of the county  
 Produce asset management plans for each council owned property based on up to date knowledge of conditions.  
 Plan capital works for the Shirehall to bring back into council and community use

**COMMUNITY:**

CO1 - Ensure all children are healthy, safe and inspired to achieve

**Outcomes**

Improve the Social Mobility Index	Reduce the Rate of Children in Need
Improve the Progress8 score	Reduce the rate of Children living in poverty
Improve the Attainment8 score	Reduce the rate of Children living with tooth decay
Improve the Good Level of Development: FSM	Reduce the rate of overweight/obese children (Reception)
Improve the Good Level of Development: Non FSM	Reduce the rate of overweight/obese children (Year 6)

**Outputs**

- The percentage of school buildings identified as safe, appropriate and up-to-date	- The percentage of children receiving social care services after an assessment
- The percentage of school leavers that are (a) not in education, employment of training, or (b) not known	- The percentage of child and family assessments completed within statutory timescales
- The percentage of (a) primary and (b) secondary schools rated good or outstanding by OFSTED	- The percentage of (a) Children in Care (b) Child Protection and (c) Child in Need visits in timescale
- The percentage of pupil attendance in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools	- The percentage of referrals which are re-referrals (within 12 months of a previous referral)
- The proportion of schools able to provide online learning	- The percentage of Section 47s that progress to Initial Child Protection Conference
- The number of children seen as part of a 4-6 month health check	- The percentage of all current child protection cases which have previously been on a CP Plan (within 2 years)
- The percentage uptake of childrens 2.5yr ages and stages review	- The proportion of audits of children's cases rated as good or outstanding
- The number of early years settings signed up to and implemented a supervised brushing programme	

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Use the Improvement Plan to work more closely with partners, and agree a common understanding of a Child Friendly County

Strengthen the role of children's centres and early years in prevention, with more families are aware of the services and benefits they are entitled to and be connected to their opportunities within their community

Training programmes for 200 staff on oral health.

Deliver a training programme of road safety including pedestrian training for school pupils

Tender construction of new school building at Peterchurch Primary School

Tender refurbishment and expansion of The Brookfield School

Plan and agree first phase of school expansions to deliver additional school places across the county

Seek approval for the rebuild of Westfield School and move to design stage

Conduct feasibility work to inform increase capacity across Hereford Pupil Referral Service and Blackmarston School

Ensure all schools have better informed pupil's mental health and wellbeing support via a training and development package

Develop a range of traded services to support increase in number of schools who operate as a academies

Improve the educational outcomes for those pupils with Education and Health Care plans

Put in place effective 'Voice of the Child' engagement so children are involved in designing services in a meaningful way

Integrate a "Right Help – Right time" approach within the Talk Community programme, so families are supported within communities

Provide more support for the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service.

Increase the number of social works with new retention and recruitment approach.



**COMMUNITY:**

CO2 - Ensure that children in care, and moving on from care, are well supported and make good life choices

**Outcomes**

Reduce the rate of Rate of Looked After Children

Increase the rate of care leavers in touch

Increase the rate of care leavers in suitable accommodation

Increase the rate of care leavers in education, employment or training

Reduce the percentage of children and young people in care with 3 or more placements

Reduce the percentage of children and young people under 16 in Care for 2.5+ years in the same placement for 2+ years

**Outputs**

The percentage of children looked after offered a health assessment offered and annual dental check

Improve the timeliness of the children who are adopted

The rate of Children coming in to care

The rate of children exiting care

The percentage of children that have a permanency plan by the second looked after review

The percentage of children that have timely (a) initial and (b) review health assessments

Increase the percentage of children that completed SDQ's

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Increase the number of foster carers by 25

Improve the range of level of support for care leavers.

Progress plans to build a children's residential home.

**COMMUNITY:**

CO3 - Build publicly owned sustainable and affordable houses and bring empty properties back in to use

**Outcomes**

Improve the house affordability ration in Herefordshire  
Redduce the number of households living in fuel poverty

**Outputs**

The number of affordable houses delivered  
The number of affordable net zero carbon houses (from April 22 onwards)  
The number of empty properties brought back in to use

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Progress the delivery of new affordable, net zero housing on council owned land  
Submit planning applications for 2 housing sites on council land  
Support at least 230 additional affordable properties in the county

**COMMUNITY:**

CO4 - Protect and improve the lives of vulnerable people

**Outcomes**

Reduce the number of people identified as Homelessness (annual count)  
Increase the proportion of people in receipt of social care support in their own homes  
Reduce the number of unplanned hospital admissions

**Outputs**

(Increase the) number of people engaging with the Healthy Lifestyle Trainer Service  
(Increase the) number of new tenancies developed for independent living  
(Reduce the) local count of Herefordshire homelessness  
(Increase the) number of cases where homelessness has been (a) prevented and (b) relieved

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Progress the building of the council's own care home with site identified, design outlined and planning application developed  
Develop and agree a Food Charter for the county.  
Submit application for the Sustainable Food Place Bronze award  
Produce a Physical Activity Strategy that outlines plans and programmes to aid health through fitness.  
Offer maximum council tax reduction scheme for eligible pensioners and people of working age  
Work with partner organisations to produce a plan to tackle health inequalities and lead health equity audit process for commissioned services  
Work with NHS and Public Health partners to implement the Integrated Care system approach agreed for Herefordshire & Worcestershire  
Establish Hoople Care to delivery care services for the council



**COMMUNITY:**

CO5 - Use technology to support home care and extend independent living

**Outcomes**

Increase the proportion of people in receipt of social care support in their own homes  
Reduce the number of unplanned hospital admissions

**Outputs**

(Reduce the) rate of admissions to care homes for clients aged under 65  
(Reduce the) rate of admissions to care homes for clients aged 65+

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Complete site works complete on the Hillside Independent living and demonstration centre.  
Create 50 bespoke wellness packages using a technology enabled 'proactive and preventative' care model  
Move the existing Telecare Service to a digital delivery model  
Create a digital tool and website that shows how technology can support people's independence and aid assessments  
Develop and deliver a training programme to support at least 50 staff on the use of technology to support residents

**COMMUNITY:**

CO6 - Support communities to help each other through a network of community hubs

**Outcomes**

Increase community resilience in Herefordshire (as measured by the Talk Community Survey)

Increase mental wellbeing in Herefordshire (as measured by the Talk Community survey)

**Outputs**

(Increase) the volunteer capacity in Herefordshire

(Increase) the number of Talk Community hubs

(Increase) the number of hits on the Talk Community Directory

**2022/23 Planned delivery**

Increase the number of Talk Community hubs to 50

Deliver 2 integrated service hubs using existing community facilities that includes working with the whole family

Make investment and improvements to libraries and museums

The following measures have been identified as valuable measures to monitor progress of the councils delivery and business as usual activity

- Average days sickness per FTE
- Percentage of mandatory training completed
- Employee engagement index
- Number of RIDDOR reportable incidents
- Revenue outturn
- Percentage of capital budget spent
- Percentage of savings delivered, or on track to be delivered
- Percentage of invoices paid on time
- Percentage of projects delivered on time
- Percentage of projects delivered on budget
- Overall resident satisfaction with the council
- Percentage of complaints responded to within timescales
- Percentage of FOIs & EIRs responded to within timescales

- Percentage of (a) major and (b) minor planning applications managed within statutory timescales
- Number of fly tipping incidents reported
- Percentage of programmed high risk (A-C) food hygiene inspections undertaken
- Percentage of food premises with a Food Hygiene Rating Score at 3 (satisfactory) or above.
- Percentage of parking income budget achieved



# Title of report: Investment in Children's Transformation

**Meeting: Cabinet**

**Meeting date: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

**Report by: Cabinet Member for Children and Families**

**Classification**

Open

**Decision type**

Key

**Wards affected**

All Wards

**Purpose**

To request the drawdown from the Financial Resilience Reserve, a total of £11.49m to support the ongoing delivery of the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

This further investment will build on and maintain the pace of improvements already delivered in 2021/22 and provide the foundations for a more secure and resilient service for the future. This funding is recommended to be allocated in two tranches, with £5m in tranche one from April 2022 and a further £6.49m from July 2022 when detailed progress against plans will also be reported.

The staffing resource asked for equates to an additional 122.75 FTE (2022/23) reducing then to 82 (2023/24) followed by further monitoring and review, against a currently approved base budget of 429 FTE (2021/2022).

**Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) **The drawdown of up to £11.49m from the Financial Resilience Reserve, in two tranches as laid out above, is approved to support resourcing the transformation stage of children's services; and**
- b) **Cabinet note the increased base budget requirement for 2023/24 onwards.**

## Alternative options

1. Cabinet could decide not approve the drawdown from the Financial Resilience Reserve. This option is not recommended as the increased capacity put in place during 2021/22 and improvement made in this period could not be sustained and the ability to deliver services would be seriously compromised.

## Key considerations

2. Mr Justice Keehan delivered a Judgement (26 March 2021) with leave for the same to be published that identified serious failings in Herefordshire council's children's services.
3. Full council unanimously supported on 27 April 2021 the establishment of an improvement board as part of the assurance and improvement strategy following the High Court judgement.
4. Council agreed a £5.2m investment to address in the short-term some of the issues raised in the High Court Judgement and a breakdown of spend in 2021-22 is set out in Appendix A.
5. On 18 May 2021 the Department for Education issued the Council with a [non-statutory improvement notice](#).
6. A Focused Visit by Ofsted in July 2021 identified shortfalls in the capacity of Social Workers; an inconsistency of social work practice, and insufficient management oversight and supervision. The previous inspection by Ofsted in 2018 and each Focused Visit since has raised similar concerns and criticism of the lack of pace of improvement was identified in the July 2021 focus visit
7. The [28 October 2021 Cabinet](#) decision to endorse the [Children and Families Strategic Improvement Plan v1.0](#)
8. An independent audit project, commissioned by the Chief Executive, concluded on 21 December 2021 having audited in excess of 1,000 cases open to Early Help and Children's Social Care. Whilst none of the audits raised serious safeguarding concerns requiring immediate action, the majority of cases audited were deemed as being Inadequate or Requiring Improvement (to be Good).
9. Herefordshire Council maintains a strong commitment to improving performance in its children's social care services and outcomes for children and young people in Herefordshire more generally.
10. Core transformation of the service is expected to take three years before a level of sustained and sustainable improvement is achieved and is aimed at:
  - a. Improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.
  - b. Making working in Herefordshire an attractive and rewarding career choice.
  - c. Embedding systemic partnership approaches and exploring alternative models of delivery.

- d. Making the service financially viable for the future across a range of services the Council delivers.

All underpinned and driven by improvement across the system of practice, management, and leadership.

11. The additional Children's Services resource, resulting from this investment ask, will achieve improvements in Ofsted priority action areas:
  - a) manageable caseloads for Social Workers;
  - b) frequent and better quality supervision and management decision making;
  - c) consistently improved social work practice.

As mentioned in paragraph 10 above, it should be noted that this is part of a three year improvement plan. Whilst this additional resource will allow us to make better decisions for children, it will take time for significant impact to be evidenced in terms of outcomes for children and in improved service assessments. Outcomes for children will be regularly monitored by benchmarking and reporting against a set of measures that matter. Quarterly reporting will be presented to Improvement Board, Children's Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

12. During the financial year 2021/22 five additional social work teams have been added to increase capacity. These comprise one assessment team, two child in need teams, one child protection and court team, and a further team added to the corporate parenting service. Additional Management and supervisory capacity has been achieved through the re-introduction of Service Managers and Managing Practitioners to teams with higher volumes of workflow and decision-making (such as in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Assessment Teams).
13. The investment in 2021-2022 has already led to increased stability of workforce, reduced caseloads (particularly in the Assessment teams), increased levels of personal and case supervisions, and increased frequency of visits to children and young people and their families.
14. Children's services have experienced and continue to see considerably higher volumes of contacts and referrals. This is in part due to significant amounts of legacy unmet need emerging, as well as improved communication and, in line with the experience of other local authorities, some impact of Covid-19 on children and families. Recent high profile national cases have also had the effect of increasing referrals across the country. More detail is provided in Appendix B. This has led to more assessments being opened and completed and an overall increase in the numbers of open cases across the service.
15. Over time, a sustainable staffing structure needs to be achieved in order that improved practice and performance can be embedded and changing demands are able to be responded to. This will require sufficient case holding professionals (social workers, family support workers, and personal advisers) and supervisory/management capacity to create organisational resilience whilst allowing for a normal level of staff turnover.
16. Further and ongoing additional resources are required to support service transformation and the delivery of the improvement plan to achieve:

- a. The retention and stabilisation of a permanent workforce and a continued level of ongoing recruitment.
- b. That there is sufficient capacity of suitably skilled and experienced professionals to work with children and families, whilst maintaining a manageable workload.
- c. That there is sufficient capacity for effective continuing management oversight and supervision.
- d. That Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWS) are supported appropriately during their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)
- e. That there is sufficient capacity to deliver high-quality and ongoing internal Quality Assurance activity, providing assurance of continuous improvement and impact.
- f. That there is sufficient resource to deliver necessary changes to the development of our practice standards, and associated IT and systems support.
- g. That support for our Foster Carers is further developed and maintained.

The detail and rationale for ongoing additional resources is provided in Appendix B.

- 17. This proposal has been a number of months in development. It would have been preferable to have aligned the request to the budget proposals agreed by Council in February 2022 but timescales did not allow for this. Initial work and demand modelling was undertaken by service leaders in September 2021. Significant increases in contacts and referrals were experienced during the autumn. These increased referrals created further pressures across the service but were most acutely experienced from October onwards in the assessment teams. These, coupled with a range of ongoing analysis activities (including the whole-service audit of open cases that did not conclude until late December), meant that the modelling had to be significantly revised, with detailed financial modelling only able to be commenced in January 2022.
- 18. It is important to acknowledge at this stage that the funds sought for 2022-23 and forecast for 2023-24 may not be the full investment required to deliver the necessary transformation and improvement programme. Children's Services may need to come back to the council with further propositions, pressures and bids but these will be introduced through the normal budget process.
- 19. An independent evaluation of these proposals and the focus of the ongoing investment will be undertaken during Quarter 1 of the financial year (2022-23) and the findings presented within the request to Cabinet to release tranche 2 of the investment.
- 20. Following this transformation programme the Children and Young People Directorate will re-establish a base budget for 2023/2024 and subsequent years alongside further targets for improved outcomes for children and for the performance of the service.
- 21. In order to establish the operating model and work plan for the future, it is planned to build on high level diagnostics undertaken in 2020/21 and produce a commissioning plan for all ages, sharing the approach, learning, good governance, compliance and commercial approach that is embedded within the Adults' services commissioning function.



## **Community impact**

22. The notice requiring improvement has a direct and indirect effect on the lives of both current and future children and families in Herefordshire.
23. The County Plan 2020–2024 includes the ambition to ‘strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together’. Specifically, the council aims to:
  - a. Ensure all children are healthy, safe, and inspired to achieve;
  - b. Ensure that children in care, and moving on from care, are well supported and make good life choices; and
  - c. Protect and improve the lives of vulnerable people. Set out any considerations relating to community impact including contribution made to corporate plan / health and wellbeing strategy or other local or national strategies or policies.

## **Environmental Impact**

24. There are no specific environmental impacts arising from this report.
25. The transformation activity will be undertaken with consideration to minimise waste and resource in line with the Council’s Environmental Policy.

## **Equality duty**

26. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to

- a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
27. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine protected characteristics:
    - a. Age;
    - b. disability;
    - c. gender reassignment;
    - d. pregnancy and maternity;

- e. marriage and civil partnership;
- f. race;
- g. religion or belief; sex; and
- h. sexual orientation.

28. In particular, the council must have due regard to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes.
29. As our projects and service delivery progresses, and changes are designed, equality impact assessment will be undertaken where necessary.

### Resource implications

30. Since April 2021, considerable additional resources have been deployed to support the Children’s Services transformation plan and improvement activity.
31. This financial request is to meet a legacy of unmet resource needs and additional resourcing to support Ofsted priority actions and the Directorate Improvement Plan.
32. **Increase in establishment**

Transformation will temporarily increase the budgeted establishment by 122.75 FTE in 2022/23 reducing to an ongoing increase in posts of 82 FTE from 2023/24

Resource	Additional FTE	
	22/23	23/24
Continuation of project teams for 12 months	24	
Auditors	6	4
Child in need teams	16	16
Service managers	9	9
Permanence team	5	5
Business support	15	15
Newly qualified social workers	15	15
Social care academy/ signs of safety	6.25	1
Advanced practitioners	12	8
Improvement lead	1	
Independent reviewing officers/child protection chairs	4	2
Managing practitioners	4.5	4
Clinical psychologist	1	1
Fostering panel adviser	1	1
Social Worker (SEND)	1	1
Data analyst	1	
Systems analyst	1	
<b>Total increase in FTE from current budget</b>	<b>122.75</b>	<b>82</b>

### 33. Cost of transformation

Transformation costs	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Review and transformation of services in response to high court judgement	5,833	11,487	4,544	21,864
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,833</b>	<b>11,487</b>	<b>4,544</b>	<b>21,864</b>

Funding streams (indicate whether base budget / external / grant / capital borrowing)	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Previously approved funding	2,542			2,542
Department for Education funding	1,700			1,700
Financial resilience reserve	1,591	11,487		13,078
Increased base budget			4,544	4,544
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,833</b>	<b>11,487</b>	<b>4,544</b>	<b>21,864</b>

### Legal implications

34. The Council was issued with a non-statutory improvement notice by the Department for Education on 18 May 2021. To comply with this notice, the Council must adhere to a number of measures, which includes

- Secretary of State appointment of an Improvement Advisor. The Council will work with the adviser for a minimum of 12 months, and until such time that the Secretary of State is satisfied this is no longer required.
- Implementation of an Improvement Plan.
- Establishment of an Improvement Board with an independent Chair (to be set up and chaired by the Department for Education (DfE) Improvement Adviser) to oversee the implementation of the improvement plan against a timescale agreed with the DfE.
- Officials or advisers from the DfE will undertake reviews of progress against the Improvement Plan at least every 6 months and more regularly where appropriate.
- The DfE will offer dedicated improvement support through its Partners in Practice arrangements and may consider additional requests for support as part of the review process.
- The Improvement Adviser will provide, to the DfE, 6 weekly reports of progress or concern against the areas set out in this notice; and progress against the improvement plan; and any other such information relevant to the improvement journey.

35. The notice sets out that the council should aim for actions included in the Improvement Plan to be delivered by the end of April 2022 or sooner, where appropriate. If there is a failure to comply with this notice or should ministers not be satisfied with the Council's progress at any stage, ministers may choose to invoke their statutory powers of intervention (s497A Education Act 1996) to direct the council to enter into an appropriate arrangement to secure the improvements required in children's services, potentially resulting in the establishment of a Trust.

## Risk management

36. The improvement notice is clear that, should the council be unwilling or unable to comply with this improvement notice, or should ministers not be satisfied with the Council's progress at any stage, ministers may choose to invoke their statutory powers of intervention (s497A Education Act 1996) to direct the council to enter into an appropriate arrangement to secure the improvements required in children's services.
37. Statutory improvement notices could be issued and more critical or enduring under-performance may necessitate the use of Statutory Directions compelling the Council to take certain actions.
38. In extreme cases the DfE can direct partial or complete outsourcing of Children Services to a third party or the establishment of a Children's Trust.
39. The following are the primary and most significant risks in delivering this decision:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
There is a risk that in the current highly competitive recruitment market costs may be higher than currently forecast.	Systems are in place to monitor demand and to manage work loads, work flow and recruitment costs.
There is a risk that we would not be able to recruit permanently to posts as anticipated and thus are reliant for a longer period on agency staff (with potential instability and increased cost).	A recruitment campaign commences in March 2022 and will continue throughout the year. Progress and impact will be monitored by the Resources Board, the Improvement Board, and reported to Cabinet through regular updates.
There is a risk that a significantly adverse report from Ofsted following an inspection in the future might place additional demands on the transformation activity.	The service, through the activity and impact of the Improvement Plan and in collaboration with the Improvement Advisor and Sector-led Improvement Partners continues to work to demonstrate impact and evidence of improvement and to prepare our best evidence for a future inspection.
There is a risk that we do not do enough to bring about the change needed, or that the pace of change is not quick enough.	We are regularly communicating with the DfE, Ofsted and key safeguarding partners. We will invite regular external review of our progress through sector-led improvement activity and peer review.

40. These and other risks associated with the delivery of Children's Services improvement are recorded on the relevant service risk register and escalated in accordance with the council's

Performance Management Framework and Risk Management Plan. The highest risks, i.e. those scoring greater than 16 after controls, are escalated to the council's Corporate Risk Register.

## Consultees

41. There has been no public consultation on this proposal.
42. The Cabinet Member and Cabinet, the Management Board, the Independent Improvement Advisor, and representatives of the Department for Education (DfE) have contributed to the development of this proposal.

## Appendices

Appendix A: Previous investment - £5.2m

Appendix B: Rationale for addition resources required.

## Background papers

None identified

## Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Governance	John Coleman	Date 23/03/2022
Finance	Louise Devlin	Date 22/03/2022
Legal	Kate Charlton	Date 02/03/2022
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 01/03/2022
Equality Duty	Carol Trachonitis	Date 01/03/2022
Procurement	Lee Robertson	Date 02/03/2022
Risk	Chris Jones	Date 01/03/2022
Human Resources	Tracey Sampson	Date 02/03/2022
Approved by	Darryl Freeman	Date 23/03/2022



## Appendix A

### £5.222 million allocation breakdown

In response to the high court judgement, in April 2021 an extraordinary council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021 allocated £5.222m from ear marked reserves to support the improvement of children's services over a two year period, across seven key areas, as shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Additional resources approved by Council on 27 April 2021 (by area)**

<b>Transformation cost</b>	<b>2021/22 £000</b>	<b>2022/23 £000</b>	<b>Total £000</b>
Improvement Board	130	130	260
Support for families	100	100	200
Legal	551	551	1,102
External legal fees	525	325	850
Human resources' support	364	289	653
Assurance and transformation	292	85	377
Interim Staffing	890	890	1,780
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,852</b>	<b>2,370</b>	<b>5,222</b>

The total sum of £5,222m approved by Council relates to staffing costs only, not non-staffing costs such as IT/laptops. Of that sum, £2,542m was allocated to Children's Services and the remainder was allocated to Legal Services, Human Resources and Communications to provide increased levels of support into the Children's Directorate, as shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Allocation of £5.22m across all council services supporting the 2 year improvement journey**

<b>Service area</b>	<b>Total funding £000</b>
Children's services	2,542
Legal services	1,952
Human resources	653
Communications	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,222</b>

## How the £5.222m has been allocated by service area

### Children's services

**Table 3: Children's services expenditure of £2,542k allocation over the two years**

Additional resources	Expenditure £000
Assurance and transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent assurance team</li> <li>Forensic audit</li> <li>Work with safeguarding business unit</li> <li>Project audit team</li> </ul>	694
Social work project teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fostering</li> <li>Assessment</li> <li>Child protection and court</li> <li>Children in care including 16+</li> </ul>	885
Interim and additional posts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership team and additional managers</li> <li>Social care academy service</li> <li>Safeguarding and review</li> <li>Set up costs for additional staff</li> </ul>	963
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,542</b>

The allocation funded the project and assurance teams for three months, interim posts to the end of the financial year.

### Legal Services

Legal Services allocation was for both internal and external legal resources as follows:

**Table 4: Legal Services budget allocation for internal and external legal resources**

	Year 1 2021/22 £000	Year 2 2022/23 £000	2 Year Total £000
Internal legal	551	551	1,102
External legal	525	325	850
<b>Total legal</b>	<b>1,076</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>1,952</b>

Legal Services expenditure of their allocation is shown below:

**Table 5: Legal Services expenditure of 1,952k allocation over the 2 years**

Additional resources	Year 1 Expenditure £000	Year 2 Expenditure £000	Total Expenditure £000
Internal legal	551	551	1,102
External legal	565	285	850



<b>Total</b>	<b>1,116</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>1,952</b>
--------------	--------------	------------	--------------

Legal costs for 2021/22 (year 1) are expected to be £40k above the £1,076k planned, all relating to external legal costs. This external support is required to meet what is assessed as being a short-term bulge in workload, and will be reduced in year 2 to return legal costs to their previous budget allocation.

It is noted that that Herefordshire Council also hold a Litigation Reserve which is drawn upon, when necessary, for court claims and settlements.

## Human Resources

Human Resources expenditure of their allocation is shown below:

**Table 6: Human Resources expenditure of £653k allocation over the 2 years**

Additional resources	Expenditure £000
Year One (2021/22) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR business partner team</li> <li>• OD support</li> <li>• Recruitment partner</li> <li>• Trade union facility time</li> </ul>	364
Year Two (2022/23) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR business partner team</li> <li>• OD support</li> <li>• Trade union facility time</li> </ul>	289
<b>Total</b>	<b>653</b>

## Communications

Communications expenditure of their allocation is shown below:

**Table 7: Communications expenditure of £ 75k allocation over the 2 years**

Additional resources	Expenditure £000
Media agency for initial response to judgement	30
Additional communications support	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>



**Appendix B.**

Additional resources required.

Date: March 2022

## **1 Overview**

1.1 Core transformation of the service is expected to take three years and is intended to:

- Improve outcomes for children, young people and their families
- Make working in Herefordshire an attractive and rewarding career choice
- Embed systemic partnership approaches and exploring alternative models of delivery.
- Address legacy resource needs and make the service financially viable for the future across a range of services the Council delivers

All underpinned and driven by improvement across the system of practice, management, and leadership. Improvement activity, and the expected improved outcomes for children and young people will continue beyond the three years.

1.2 Further and ongoing resources are required to support transformation and the improvement plan to ensure:

- The retention and recruitment of the workforce
- That there are adequate staffing levels to ensure statutory guidance and legislation is complied with
- That there is sufficient capacity of suitably skilled and experienced professionals to work effectively with children and families, whilst maintaining a manageable workload
- That there is sufficient capacity for effective management oversight and supervision
- That Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) are supported appropriately during their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)
- That there is sufficient capacity to deliver high-quality and ongoing quality assurance activity, providing assurance of continuous improvement and impact
- That there is sufficient resources to deliver necessary changes to the development of our practice standards, and associated IT and systems support
- That support for our Foster Carers is further developed and maintained

## **2 Additional resources required and rationale.**

### **Retention and recruitment**

2.1 Following the High Court judgement, Herefordshire has experienced significant challenges in the retention of existing permanent colleagues for a period and the recruitment of experienced Social Workers and Managers who are central to workforce stability and improved practice.

2.2 A sustainable staffing structure needs to be developed whilst improvement is ongoing and is characterised by sufficiency of capacity; manageable caseloads; stable and effective leadership and management; good learning and development opportunities; competitive pay and conditions; and a realistic but ambitious plan to 'grow our own' for the future.

### **Sufficiency of capacity**

2.3 High caseloads were noted in the most recent Ofsted Inspection and in the two most recent Ofsted focused visits. Ofsted noted that high caseloads impact adversely on the ability to respond effectively to children in need and protection. In addition to this in the two most recent Ofsted focused visits (December 2019 and June 2021) Newly Qualified Social Workers were seen to have a caseloads which were too high.

- 2.4 In addition to the capacity added to the service since April 2021, the sufficiency of our workforce is further promoted by the activity of our Improvement Plan and a forthcoming recruitment campaign (with Community Care, a leading Social Care platform). “Our Ambitions for Our People” a key workforce framework document sets out how we aim to move to a permanent workforce which enables us to comply with statutory services and supports us to continue on our improvement journey.

### **Social Work Teams: Assessment / CP & Court/ Fostering**

- 2.6 The Local Authority has seen a significant increase in demand over the past year and most significantly in the past six months (see section 3 of this Appendix). To effectively respond to and manage caseloads, workflow and currently high demands on the service a number of additional Social Work (Project) Teams have been deployed and are currently in place:
- Assessment Team (x1)
  - Child in Need Teams (x2)
  - Child Protection & Court Team (x1)
  - Corporate Parenting / Permanence Team (x1)

- 2.7 It is proposed that the additional capacity currently in place remains in place for the duration of the next financial year 2022/23 and a review is conducted in October 2022 to determine whether further deployment would be warranted.

- 2.8 A withdrawal of the teams prior to this has the potential to reverse the improvements made thus far, and will slow the pace of improvement, increase caseloads and have a detrimental impact on the outcomes for children and families. Not continuing with teams at present would pose a significant risk to the Local Authority in terms of meeting its statutory duties.

### **Sufficiency of management oversight and supervision**

- 2.9 The frequency and effectiveness of case supervision is currently one of the Priority Actions set by Ofsted during the most recent Focussed Visit (June 2021); indeed a critique of management oversight and supervision has been a consistent feature at every Ofsted Inspection and visit since 2012 (Inspection July 2012, Inspection May 2014, Inspection June 2018, Visit January 2019, Visit December 2019, Visit June 2021).

### **Service Managers**

- 2.10 The re-introduction of a layer of Service Managers has been identified as being key to service and practice improvement, freeing up Heads of Service to be able to focus on strategic management, service development, quality assurance, and partner engagement. The Service Managers provide vital day-to-day support and supervision to Team Managers and are better placed to drive performance and practice improvement.
- 2.11 Service Managers are required to create the optimal conditions for enabling good social work practice to flourish and will contribute to key decision-making processes in case work, such as threshold decisions for legal proceedings, and whether or not to bring children into our care.
- 2.12 Service Managers will be available to discuss complex cases and provide supervision to Managers but in general they should be less involved on a day to day basis in case work

and much more involved in creating a culture which supports and develops the social work teams and other staff in the organisation. Service Managers will support Managers by dealing with matters that would otherwise reduce the availability of frontline managers to focus on the quality of practice within their team.

- 2.13 It is proposed that Service Manager posts will be retained beyond the 2022/23 financial year and added to the base budget in due course.

### **Managing Practitioners.**

- 2.14 These are posts that sit between the Team Manager and Advanced Practitioners. The primary purpose of the Managing Practitioner is to add supervisory capacity and to assist with decision-making and the timely progress of interventions.
- 2.15 There are already a small number of Managing Practitioner posts in various teams across the service, where there are high volumes of work, or higher than normal case decisions to be made, including one in the MASH.
- 2.16 Increasing the number of Managing Practitioners will enable better quality and more timely decision making and to provide additional management support in area of high throughput such as the MASH and the Assessment Teams. The speed and quality of decision and the quality of assessments making in these areas was considered to be inadequate by the Service-wide Case Audit (completed in 2021).
- 2.17 Managing Practitioners provide professional support oversight and guidance to children's social work/social care staff on a day-to-day basis. This will enable better quality decision making and ensure that children's voices and lived experiences are evident within social work assessments and plans. Managing Practitioners help to ensure that there is a good throughput of work and that cases are progressed without any drift and delay.
- 2.18 The additional Managing Practitioner posts are required throughout 2022/23 and their impact and any future need will considered as a part of the capacity review to be conducted in October 2022.

### **Support for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs)**

- 2.19 Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) are an important segment of the Social Care workforce and the strategy for 'growing our own'. NQSWs are required to complete an Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) where they should benefit from a "protected" caseload (i.e. considerably less of a caseload than a fully qualified Social Worker initially, building throughout the year); additional learning and development opportunities; and an increased frequency of supervision. They also complete a portfolio of evidence throughout the year.
- 2.20 NQSWs are currently part of the establishment and this has made it impossible for Team Managers to ensure that their caseload has been protected; this is exacerbated at times of high demand such as at present. In the most recent visit Ofsted noted that caseloads for NQSWs were too high.
- 2.21 To ensure that NQSWs are well supported and have an appropriate and protected caseload it is proposed that 15 NQSWs become supernumerary to the core establishment (calculated as being the most that we are able to support within the current organisational structure in 2022/2023).

- 2.22 This will ensure that NQSW's have a protected caseload (whilst at the same time adding capacity that increases over the year of their ASYE) and are able to receive, through the activity of the Social Work Academy the higher levels of support and supervision.
- 2.23 Under this proposal, once a NQSW successfully completes their ASYE, they then become a part of the core establishment, joining a team and either replacing a locum social worker, or filling a vacant post.

### **Quality Assurance and quality of practice**

- 2.24 The most recent Ofsted visit marked the inconsistency of Social Work practice as a key priority action for the Local Authority to address. Additionally, the service-wide Audit project which audited in excess of 1,100 cases in 2021 graded 43% of cases as being Inadequate.

### **Signs of Safety Leads and IT Support**

- 2.25 Signs of Safety is our Social Work Practice Model and this was implemented approximately one year ago (2020/21). However, the initial implementation was not sufficiently considered and was disrupted by the timing and impact of the High Court Judgement. At present Signs of Safety is not the enabler of best practice that it was intended to be.
- 2.26 Staff feedback and the service-wide Audit Project have noted that a number of the current Signs of Safety templates in use are not easily understood by parents and are cumbersome to complete. On occasions a number of different versions of the same document are completed resulting in duplication of effort.
- 2.27 The Signs of Safety Leads and dedicated IT Support will review, revise and relaunch the Signs of Safety documentation in use to promote better practice and a closer alignment to the Signs of Safety practice model. This will make the forms more easily used and completed by practitioners (reducing the burden of recording on them) and able to be more easily understood by families.
- 2.28 Increased training will be provided to our workforce on how to use the revised templates and partner agencies will be invited to training to ensure that the approach across our partnership is consistent and that the same language in respect of risk is used.

### **Quality Assurance Manager and Audit Team**

- 2.29 As we progress through our improvement journey it is imperative that there is a strong quality assurance function to allow for thematic and deep-dive audits to measure progress and make ongoing judgements on the quality of Social Work practice.
- 2.30 From June 2021 onwards, all audits within children's Social Care were undertaken by the service-wide Audit Project which was staffed by Independent (interim) Auditors. This function needs to be transferred back to the Local Authority in order that we build and sustain robust programmes of quality assurance activity which in turn help to drive performance and practice improvement. This proposal creates a small Quality Assurance team which will be required beyond 2022/23. The QA Team will assist in the training and development of audit and quality assurance capacity within our managers; they will moderate audits completed by managers; and will provide an important role in ensuring that actions recommended within audits are completed

### **Quality of data and system**

- 2.31 The drive to improve, the additional management oversight, and a better understanding of our services have led to an increased need for accurate performance data to enable a more pro-active style of management using data and information intelligently. The recent introduction of PowerBI has started to allow managers to undertake more self-serve analysis and get better insight into the cohort of children that we support and safeguard. This work needs to continue at pace to ensure that PowerBI captures all areas of Children's Services and in the short term there is insufficient specialist capacity.
- 2.32 In addition to the above, there has been a recognition that some of the forms and templates in Mosaic (Social Care recording system) do not promote best practice. Changes have been made and new templates, aligned to the Signs of Safety practice model, have been created. Workflow issues within Mosaic have also been improved. It is vital that this work continues to ensure that Social Workers and Managers have the tools which best support them in their job; at present there is a backlog in Mosaic changes needed.
- 2.33 An additional Data Analyst and an additional Systems Analyst both a period of 12 months will build capacity for system changes and reporting and will assist with the full roll-out of PowerBI.

### **Support for Foster Carers**

- 2.34 Foster Carers can be faced with young people in their care who display challenging behaviours. Whilst support can be available, for instance from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health, to better support Foster Carers we want to develop a therapeutic service staffed by a Clinical Psychologist to provide advice, guidance and support to Foster Carers and Supervising Social Workers.
- 2.35 A Clinical Psychologist will ensure that there is a more consistent approach in responding to such challenging behaviours. This will strengthen the foster placement, preventing the placement from breaking down and will be a better outcome for the young person, potentially reduce costs (subsequent placements of young people with challenging behaviours are often more expensive) and will assist in the retention of Local Authority Foster Carers.

### **Business Support**

- 2.36 This proposal includes the addition of 15 Business Support posts. As indicated there have been significant changes in demand which have placed pressures on Business Support and indirectly on Social Work Practitioners. These increased pressures have resulted in practitioners having to increasingly undertake administrative tasks. To re-align the business support capacity following the increase in demand will allow Social Workers and their Managers to concentrate on carrying out statutory duties achieving better outcomes for children.

## **3 Changes in Demand**

- 3.1 Children's social care and early help services are demand-led services. Changes in the population, changes in legislation, societal factors and many other influences can each dramatically affect demand (and pressures on services) both in the short and longer-term.



3.2 Herefordshire children's services have experienced a significant rise in contacts and referrals leading to increased numbers of assessments required, and in the number of open cases. The increased demand has far out-stripped the established capacity in the service and necessitated additional capacity being added in 2021/22 which this proposal seeks to continue during 2022/23.

3.3 In September 2021, the service strengthened the management oversight and decision making in the MASH. This resulted in more consistent and appropriate application of threshold and increased the confidence of referrers in the MASH. As a consequence the number of referrals rose significantly, exacerbated by the emergence of legacy unmet need in a significant number of cases. It is likely that the impact of Covid-19 on families and communities, and society's response to high-profile cases such as those concerning the deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson will have also contributed to the rise in referrals

### Referrals

3.4 Historically, the rate of Referrals (number per 10,000 children) in Herefordshire has been lower than both England and our statistical neighbours and England. Due to changes in the application of threshold and national events (such as the news of the conviction of murder of the parents of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson) there has been a significant increase in Referrals.

3.5 The increase of referrals leads to an increased need for rapid management decisions which will be alleviated by the proposed additional Managing Practitioners and Service Manager.

3.6 The chart below (figure 1) shows how the rate of referrals per 10,000 children had more than tripled from 300 referrals per 10,000 children (2020/21) to 1192 per 10,000 at the peak in November 2021 and a 986 (annualised rate as at the end of December 2021).

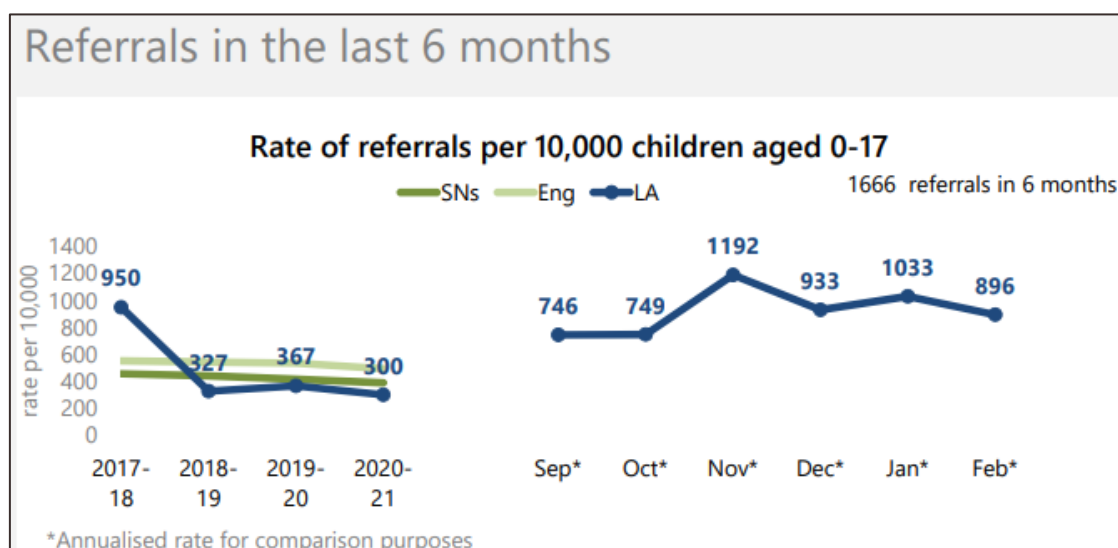


Figure 1 Rate of referrals per 10,000 children aged 0-17yrs. Source: ChAT report 20220228

3.7 Whilst the rate has reduced slightly at the start of 2022 it remains at a rate significantly higher than the service had capacity for at the start of the year 2021/22 and will be closely monitored and responded to by service leaders.

## Assessments

- 3.8 Historically, the rate of completed Assessments per 10,000 children aged 0-17yrs in Herefordshire has been below statistical neighbours and England. Following an Audit report noting the application of threshold was inconsistently applied and was at times too high changes have been implemented which has contributed to an increase of Referrals and subsequently Assessments.
- 3.9 The chart below (figure 2) shows that the rate of completed assessments has doubled from 374 assessments per 10,000 children (2020/21) to 973 at the recent peak in December 2021 and 949 (annualised rate as at the end of December).

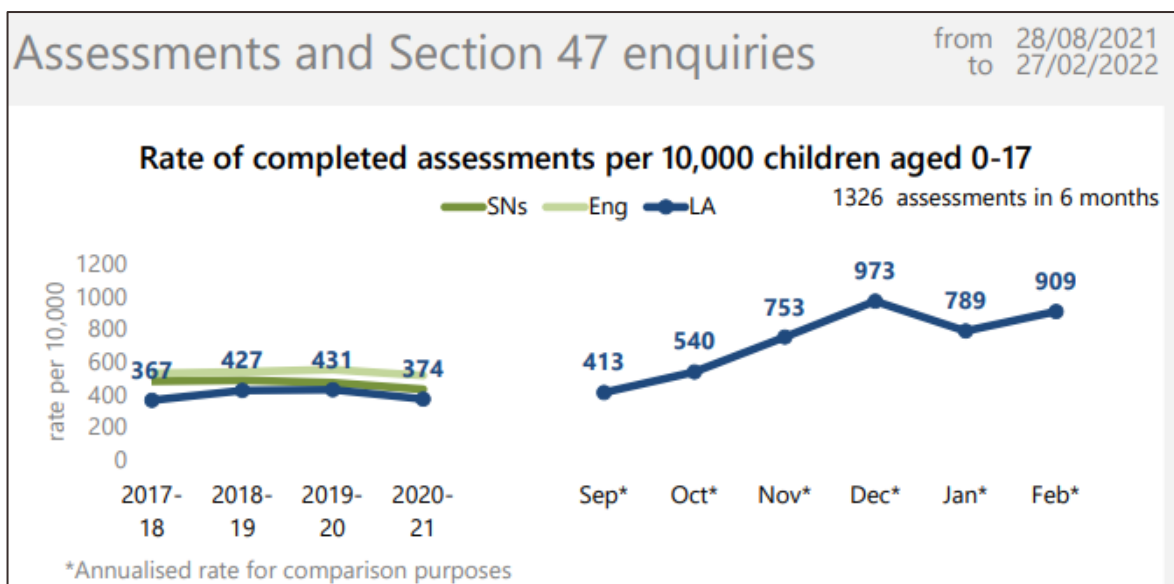


Figure 2 Rate of completed assessments per 10,000 children aged 0-17yrs. Source: ChAT report 20220228

## Child in Need Plans

- 3.10 The rate (per 10,000) of children subject to a Child in Need Plan has risen year on year since 2018/19. Whilst the rise in 2021/22 has not risen as sharply in the previous year it has risen and combined with the rises in referrals and assessments adds to a picture of increased pressure and limited capacity.
- 3.11 The chart below (figure 3) shows that the rate of children with an open episode of need per 10,000 children aged 0-17yrs has increased by 14% from 402 children per 10,000 children (2020/21) to 454 in December and 457 (annualised rate as at the end of December).

### Rate of children with an open episode of need per 10,000 children aged 0-17

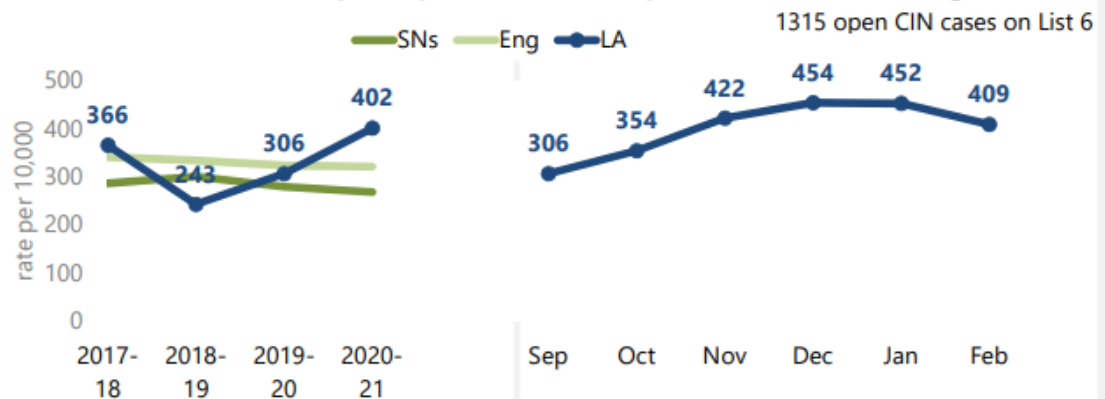


Figure 3 Rate of children with an open episode of need per 10,000 children aged 0-17yrs. Source: ChAT report 20220228

### Child Protection Plans

- 3.12 With the exception of 2017/18, historically the rate (number per 10,000 children) of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP Plan) in Herefordshire has been below statistical neighbours and England. Corrections have been made in the application of threshold which has resulted in an increased number of children being made subject to a Child Protection Plan
- 3.13 With the exception of 2017/18, historically the rate (number per 10,000 children) of children subject
- 3.14 The chart below shows that the rate of children subject to a Child Protection Plan has increased by 250% from 30 children being subject to a CP Plan per 10,000 children (2020/21) to 76 as at the end of February 2022. The increased numbers of children subject of a child protection plan place additional pressures on case holding workers in the relevant teams and on the team of child protection conference chairs.

### Rate of open Child Protection plans (per 10k aged 0-17)

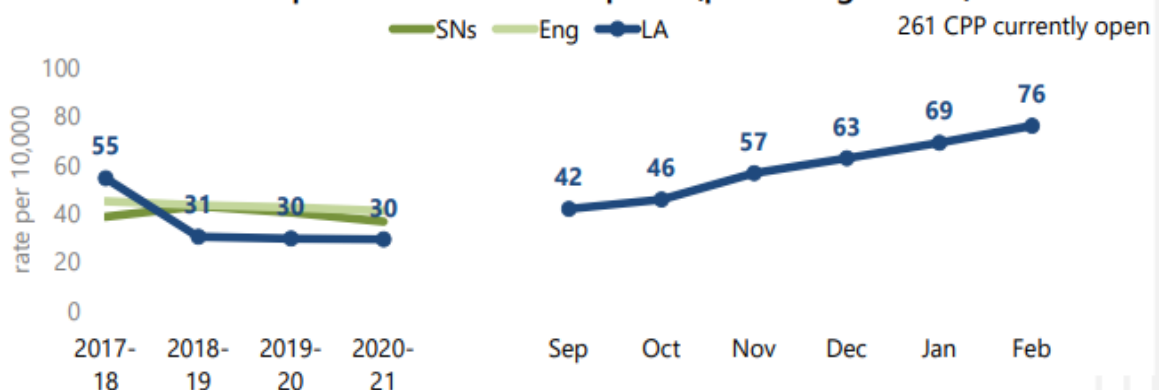


Figure 4 Rate of open Child Protection plans per 10,000 children aged 0-17yrs. Source: ChAT report 20220228

### Average caseloads for social workers

- 3.15 Average caseloads vary across the service. Indicative caseloads as at the end of February 2022 are outlined in the table below:

<b>Team name*</b>	<b>Average caseload</b>
Assessment Team 1	25
Assessment Team 2	28
Assessment Team 3	35
Assessment Team 4	31
Assessment Team 5	23
<b>Average across the Assessment Teams</b>	<b>28</b>
Child in Need Team 1	22
Child in Need Team 2	22
<b>Average across the Child in Need Teams</b>	<b>22</b>
Child Protection and Court Team 1	17
Child Protection and Court Team 2	25
Child Protection and Court Team 3	19
Child Protection and Court Team 4	18
<b>Average across the CP and Court Teams</b>	<b>20</b>
Children Looked After Team 1	18
Children Looked After Team 2	17
Children Looked After Team 3	18
<b>Average across the CLA Teams</b>	<b>18</b>
*The 16+ and Children with Disability teams are not included in this chart as case allocation is managed differently.	

- 3.16 It is our intent that all case holding social workers have a manageable caseload which when comparing to services in other areas of the country that are rated as good or outstanding is typically a caseload of between 15-18 children or young people. Our caseloads are reducing, as a consequence of improved management oversight and better workflow and despite the increased demand outlined elsewhere in this report but remain higher than we aspire to. These caseloads reflect the increased capacity added in 2021/22 and that we propose to retain during 2022/23.

# Title of report: **Communications Strategy 2022-2025**

**Meeting: Cabinet**

**Meeting date: Thursday 24 March 2022**

**Report by: Cabinet member housing, regulatory services, and community safety;**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

This report recommends to Cabinet a revised Communications Strategy and associated protocols to help align corporate communications to improve the way the council communicates to residents and stakeholders.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) The Communications Strategy is approved**
- b) The accompanying Communications Protocols and Principles are approved.**

## Alternative options

1. The Council could choose not to use a Corporate Communication Strategy. This is not advised as a co-ordinated communication approach will be more effective and supportive for our residents, staff and stakeholders
2. The Council could choose not to use Communication Protocols. This is not advised as a co-ordinated communication approach will be more effective and supportive for our residents, staff and stakeholders

## Key considerations

3. The current Communications Strategy expired in 2020. The Communications Strategy 2022-2025 has been updated with the County Plan messaging and supports the council's delivery plan, following the global Covid-19 pandemic along with other important issues that have an ongoing impact in Herefordshire.
4. The Communications Strategy includes the corporate narrative, which is described by the Local Government Association (LGA) as, 'fundamental to your organisation's position and mission in its area. Effective organisational narratives:
  - Build confidence and understanding for staff, partners and communities by structuring, prioritising, and ascribing meaning to experiences and beliefs
  - Support behaviour change (in the organisation) or promote social change (in communities) by communicating core behaviours and values, or, by reinforcing coherence (in a world where we are bombarded with information and messages)
  - Make the vision of the organisation stack up / believable, explain why the organisation thinks that, and build trust because it is human
  - Provide orientation in times of uncertainty when making critical decisions very quickly may be essential, and complexity needs to be reduced
  - Enhance the impact of your communications by telling a more memorable tale in which only a few specific properties of the organisation are emphasised'
5. The corporate narrative has been developed together with Cabinet Members and members of Management Board, the Communications Team and a Communications Advisor from the LGA.
6. The Communications Strategy is based on the principles of good strategic communications, outlining our overall approach to developing communications focused on the County Plan and establishing a framework for pro-active communications work over the coming period.
7. The County Plan has three key themes - connectivity, wellbeing and sustainability, which sit at the core of our policy making, planning and design for the future. These themes form the basis of planned and proactive corporate communications work focusing on campaign-led activity, stakeholder engagement and internal communications.
8. A campaign-led approach will support planned, pro-active and focused communications work. Using Government Communications Service recommended approaches, a communications plan will be developed for each campaign so that specific key messaging, channels and

audiences can be identified. Each campaign will support at least one of the three key themes in the County Plan - connectivity, wellbeing and sustainability.

## Community impact

9. Revising the Communications Strategy and aligning with County Plan messaging will allow the council to be better understood and known for the work it is undertaking. It will allow residents and stakeholders to feel better informed and provide more opportunity for effective communication.
10. Pro-active communications activity depends on effective targeting of audiences, ensuring resources are focused in the right way and using the communications channels specific audiences prefer. Understanding audiences - who we are trying to reach and what we want them to do and then prioritising groups to create audiences based on similar characteristics (demography, geography, likely interest, sector), is a priority.
11. We will identify the ways in which our residents, businesses, visitors and partners prefer to get information about our work and use this insight to tailor the way we communicate and engage with our audiences. This will ensure communications campaigns are effectively resourced, use the right communications channels and are evaluated. We will use our existing insight and data and commission more research where needed.
12. The Communications Strategy will provide staff and stakeholders with the information and tools they need to help understand and communicate Herefordshire Council's priorities and policies.

## Environmental Impact

13. The Communications Strategy will help promote Herefordshire Council's actions to address the Climate and Ecological Emergency and [environmental policy commitments](#) including:
  - Increase flood resilience and reduce levels of phosphate pollution in the county's river
  - Reduce the council's carbon emissions
  - Work in partnership with others to reduce county carbon emissions
  - Improve the air quality within Herefordshire
  - Improve residents' access to green space in Herefordshire
  - Improve energy efficiency of homes and build standards for new housing
  - Increase the number of short distance trips being done by sustainable modes of travel – walking, cycling, public transport
14. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
15. Whilst this is a strategic decision on a corporate approach, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy. Corporate campaigns will seek to utilise the most environmentally-friendly approaches and ensure the

impact of any printed materials is justified by the needs of the audience and effectiveness of the communication channel.

16. All printed publications will be recyclable and printed on sustainable paper stock

## **Equality duty**

17. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows: A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to
  - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. The commitment to improved, audience-focused communications should allow us to be more effective in our equality duty.

## **Resource implications**

18. The cost of delivering the Communications Strategy will be delivered within the current Communications Centre budget, with additional funding by services as required for specified campaigns. This may include the use of additional staff or outside agencies and these will be recruited or procured in line with the council's recruitment procedures and/or contract procedure rules.

## **Legal implications**

19. There is no statutory requirement for the council to have a communications strategy although it is good practice.
20. There are no legal implications arising from this report of the adoption of the Communications Strategy 2020 - 2024.



## Risk management

<b>Risk / opportunity</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
If corporate messaging is uncoordinated and unplanned, residents and stakeholders may be unaware of council policies, services and approaches	The council works to an agreed narrative and uses the same, simple, messages to help people understand (Corporate)
If too many campaigns are running at one time, they may be less effective and compete with each other	The council plans its corporate campaigns and uses time and resource effectively and aligned with media interest (Service)
If there are no corporate protocols, staff and members may not understand their roles and responsibilities relating to media and social media	Communication protocols provide staff and members with guidance on speaking publicly. Media spokespeople will be identified and adequately trained for effective interviews. (Service)
If insufficient priority and importance is placed on the corporate communication approach, this may impact on the ability for the Communications Team to lead the organisation under its responsibility as a category 2 responder to warn and inform	The corporate communications approach will be observed by all staff and advocated by the senior management team. (Corporate)
If communications are perceived to be the sole responsibility of the Communications Team, the organisation will not be effective in communicating to its stakeholders	An internal campaign to promote the narrative, strategy and protocols, and to engage with staff and members will be undertaken. (Service)

## Consultees

21. Consultation has been undertaken with councillors and feedback can be seen in Appendix 3. Documents were circulated on 25<sup>th</sup> January and all member briefings took place virtually on Wednesday 9 February and Tuesday 15 February. Feedback has been received via email and through verbal feedback at the virtual events.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1- Communications Strategy
- Appendix 2- Communications protocols and principles
- Appendix 3- Councillor feedback

## Background papers

None

## Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published

Governance	Sarah Buffrey	Date 04/02/2022
Finance	Audrey Clements	Date 25/01/2022
Legal	Alice McAlpine	Date 27/01/2022
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 01/02/2022
Equality Duty	Carol Trachonitis	Date 27/01/2022
Procurement	Mark Cage	Date 04/02/2022
Risk	Kevin Lloyd	Date 02/02/2022

Approved by [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) Date [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

[Note: Please remember to overwrite or delete the guidance highlighted in grey]

**Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**

# Communications Strategy 2022-2025

---



**Safe, strong and connected  
Working together for the future of Herefordshire**

Contents	
Context .....	3
Objectives .....	4
Our values .....	4
Strategic approach.....	6
Narrative .....	7
Channels.....	11
Resources.....	13
Links and interdependencies.....	14
Insight & Evaluation .....	15

## Context

Herefordshire Council's County Plan, adopted by the Council in February 2020, has a clear vision for the future of the county:

***Respecting our past, shaping our future - we will improve the sustainability, connectivity and wellbeing of our county by strengthening our communities, creating a thriving local economy and protecting and enhancing our environment.***

Since the County Plan was adopted the Covid pandemic has changed the world – but the vision for the county remains relevant. With the pandemic and other significant organisational changes, we must now refocus our vision, review our priorities and work with staff, residents, partners, communities and businesses to lead Herefordshire into the future with confidence.

The Local Government Association recommends that strategic communications should deliver:

- Leadership - clarity of purpose and commitment
- A distinctive brand
- A clear vision
- Authenticity to the local area
- A strategic approach to communications
- A corporately agreed, fully evaluated annual communications plan
- Communications activity based on research with robust evaluation
- Communications that are owned by everyone

This strategy is based on these principles of good strategic communications, outlining our overall approach to developing communications focused on the County Plan and establishing a framework for pro-active communications work over the coming period.

The County Plan has three key themes - **connectivity, wellbeing and sustainability**, which sit at the core of our policy making, planning and design for the future. These themes

form the basis of planned and proactive corporate communications work focusing on campaign-led activity, stakeholder engagement and internal communications.

## Objectives

The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Help our residents and stakeholders feel informed about council services and policies and how to engage with them.
- Ensure communications are co-ordinated, consistent, targeted and driven by insight so that communications is delivered at the right time, in the right way to the right people.
- Ensure the Council's role is understood and appreciated by residents, visitors, partners and businesses so they feel safe, supported and confident about the future.
- Develop pride - across internal and external audiences - in the Council's unique role in leading Herefordshire into the future with confidence, clarity and an inspiring vision for the future.
- Ensure all employees and Members are effectively supported with frequent, clear and consistent communications and updates.

## Our values

Communication is a shared responsibility and everyone has a part to play in supporting and delivering good communications for the organisation. The Communication Protocols and Principles, aligned with the principles in the County Plan, outline our collective approach - articulating the way we deliver communications across Herefordshire Council:

All of this underpins our **PEOPLE values**. Our values guide the way we act, what we say and how we think and aid us in making decisions:

**People** Treating people fairly, with compassion, respect and dignity

**Excellence** Striving for excellent services, care and quality of life in Herefordshire

**Openness** Being open, transparent and accountable

**Partnership** Working in partnership and with all our diverse communities

**Listening** Actively listening to, understanding and taking into account people's views and needs

**Environment** Protecting and promoting our outstanding natural environment and heritage for the benefit of all

We will only achieve our potential by every individual being involved in using the values and being guided by the principles to make improvements in how they work and how we work together.

## **Strategic approach**

A campaign-led approach will support planned, pro-active and focused communications work. Using Government Communications Service recommended approaches, a communications plan will be developed for each campaign so that specific key messaging, channels and audiences can be identified.

Each campaign will support at least one of the three key themes in the County Plan - **connectivity, wellbeing and sustainability**. Some examples are listed below:

### **Connectivity**

#### **Connecting people digitally and physically across communities, in local neighbourhoods and to the wider world**

Digital connectivity – supporting flexible working for staff, connecting rural communities

Connecting and supporting communities – especially tackling inequalities

Connecting with partners – parish councils, businesses

Connecting locally – supporting and promoting local, independent shops and businesses

### **Wellbeing**

#### **Help people feel safe, supported and to value Herefordshire and their community**

Supporting vulnerable people and communities and developing the strong community networks that have grown and flourished

Quality of life – appreciating what's special about Herefordshire as a place to live, work and visit

Helping people most impacted by pandemic (jobs/business/young people)

Nurturing and encouraging creativity and innovation

Welcoming visitors, promoting pride in Herefordshire and all it has to offer

### **Sustainability**



**Pride in Hereford's unique and beautiful environment and rural heritage and tackling the climate challenge through new approaches to sustainability**

Tackling the climate and ecological emergency

Travel to work/school – encouraging more walking and cycling

Public transport – safe, accessible and connecting communities

Rural environment – supporting farming and rural communities

Shopping/buying/doing business in local neighbourhoods

**Narrative**

Telling our story simply, effectively and truthfully has never been more important. A good story – our narrative – allows us to share our vision, key messages and plans with employees, residents and partners in a powerful and compelling way. It's a key tool for building consensus across an organisation – telling the tale of a past and present that everyone recognises, explaining current challenges and issues and outlining a future that people want to make happen.

A successful narrative will see everyone – members, managers and employees at all levels – telling the same story about the council to anyone who asks. Used pragmatically, it can help save time and energy, with our narrative used repeatedly across our communication and help guide strategic decision making.

A set of corporate key messages aligned to the themes in the County Plan and to reflect current corporate focus will be developed and reviewed quarterly to ensure they are relevant and supportive. Additional key messages will be developed for specific campaigns, delivering clear and consistent communications across all activity.

## OUR NARRATIVE

Helping the people of Herefordshire has never been more important.

The pandemic shone a new light on the vital frontline services we continued to deliver every day as the world locked down – a powerful reminder of the important work we do that usually goes unnoticed. As we look to the future those services will continue to be at the heart of all we do. Everyone who works for Herefordshire Council has a part to play in delivering a better future for the county and all our employees should feel supported, confident and able to do their best.

We're realistic about the scale of the challenges ahead and understand what has held us back in the past. The loss of government funding and rising costs of the services we deliver to Herefordshire people means we're facing tough choices about where to focus our resources. Inequalities in some of our neighbourhoods are stark and struggling communities need extra support. We will deliver better support to our most vulnerable children and their families, and we need new and stronger relationships with partners across the region, and beyond, to help us tackle the challenges our county faces.

We know that today, more than ever, it's important to connect people across communities - virtually and physically - locally and to the wider world. Our small population is spread over a large area of picturesque countryside. That means we have to work harder to reach people and our services have to travel further to reach the community. But it also means we have strong local networks across towns, villages and communities in a county where it feels like everybody knows everybody.

We will use our unique role as local leaders to help people feel safe, supported and proud of our county. We'll play our part in tackling the climate and ecological emergency through new approaches to sustainability. We will value our natural resources and take action to do all we can to protect them.

We will grow our towns and city centres into vibrant and attractive centres full of nature, for people to live in, work in and visit. We'll work in partnership with our communities, listening

to what our residents and businesses tell us is important, and use our learning, experience and understanding to shape what our county needs for a successful future.

We know that buying a home is a challenge for many in Herefordshire - both for availability and affordability and so we will ensure there are genuinely affordable homes available across the county. Our older residents are valued and more live here than in other areas, with 21,000 of these providing at least an hour a week of important, unpaid care for others. Herefordshire is also a county for families and provide the best of both worlds - the best of modern living mixed with unspoilt countryside and life away from the rat race. We will seek to create new, better jobs in emerging sectors such as the green economy and cyber security to attract new families.

We will focus our support on those who have nowhere else to go and ensure they receive the right help at the right time. A third of the jobs in the county pay less than the real living wage and more than 4,000 children in Herefordshire are in families who struggle to make ends meet. Keeping warm has a profound impact on health and wellbeing and across the county more than five times as many households are exposed to excess cold than the national average. We will ensure residents get help to make their homes warm, to keep people safe and well.

We will work closely with those who live and work here so we can deliver our vision at the heart of the County Plan which guides all we do: *Respecting our past, shaping our future - we will improve the sustainability, connectivity and wellbeing of our county by strengthening our communities, creating a thriving local economy and protecting and enhancing our environment.*

We face the future as a proud county with a rich heritage, strong, creative and connected communities, and an absolute commitment to build a better future for us all – so that everyone feels safe, supported and is proud to live here.

## Using our narrative

Our narrative will be used consistently across all our communications. We will do this by:

- Working with all staff so they understand the importance of sharing our story, can tell their own positive stories about the place and the Council and become advocates and ambassadors for our work
- Working with stakeholders so they support and share our story for us

## Audiences

Pro-active communications activity depends on effective targeting of audiences, ensuring resources are focused in the right way and using the communications channels specific audiences prefer.

Understanding audiences - who we are trying to reach and what we want them to do and then prioritising groups to create audiences based on similar characteristics (demography, geography, likely interest, sector), is a priority.

We will identify the ways in which our residents, businesses, visitors and partners prefer to get information about our work and use this insight to tailor the way we communicate and engage with our audiences. This will ensure communications campaigns are effectively resourced, use the right communications channels and are evaluated. We will use our existing insight and data and commission more research where needed.

Key audiences – to be expanded in specific campaign plans - will include:

Residents

Businesses (and business sector groups such as LEP, Chamber, NFU)

Members

Employees

Parish and town councils

Voluntary sector

Partners (NHS, Police, Fire)

Media

MPs

Government

## **Channels**

Effective communications relies on a mix of communications channels, including **media relations**, **direct communications** (leaflets, publications, digital and social media), **events** and **internal and partner communications** (working with employees and stakeholders to ensure everyone gets consistent, timely information).

### **Media relations**

Herefordshire has a strong print media presence across the county, particularly the Hereford Times (alongside other weekly newspapers across the area). There is a BBC radio station (shared with Worcestershire) and independent stations. Active partnerships with print and broadcast media through joint campaigns will help campaigns reach a key demographic (older residents without access to digital communications) and support important local businesses valued by residents, along with an important and valued local free press.

### **Events**

Herefordshire Council has established regular Parish summits which provide an opportunity for parish councillors to hear more about the council's approach and priorities. These will continue and will be supported by the Talk Community approach for effective local engagement. Business summits have also been established and will continue to help the local business community engage with the council's vision and activity as we create and deliver the 'Big Plan' and a place-based narrative and vision for Herefordshire. There are also service-specific and themed events which target specific audiences and sectors, and these continue to be an effective way to inform and engage our community.

### **Internal and partner communications.**

Our employees are our greatest asset, with an important role to play in sharing our story and advocating for the Council. We will ensure employees get the information they need to share our campaigns with friends, families and neighbours in their communities so they can act as a network of communicators across the county. We will adopt an employee-first, real-time approach, so employees hear about our communications plans, campaigns and news before external audiences. We will continue to recognise and highlight the achievements and importance of our frontline and key workers who have played such an important part in keeping vital services running during lockdown. Endorsement and active support for our campaigns from partners and stakeholders will be vital. We will work with our partners to provide them with the tools they need to support our campaigns – including briefings, developing toolkits of marketing collateral for their use and regular updates on activity. We will work in partnership with local social media news outlets and local community group pages when appropriate, recognising that there is no current industry regulation of social news channels.

### **Direct communications**

Councils increasingly use a range of communications tools and channels to talk directly to their audiences. These include social and digital media channels (website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), e-newsletters, resident magazines and traditional tools like posters and leaflets. Campaigns will use a variety of direct communications channels, targeted to reach the right audiences, with a focus on the most cost-effective communications channels.

We will create an improved way of engaging digitally with residents via our website both through e-communications and customer accounts. We will use corporate communication tools to ensure consistency and a unified customer experience. This will also ensure we sufficiently address and adhere to the General Data Protection Regulation and Public Sector Accessibility Regulation requirements.

Our current devolved engagement model can lead to repetition or omission and we will establish a corporate approach and processes to help ensure our audiences are

communicated with effectively, and that there is opportunity evaluate and improve our communication and engagement activity.

We will continue to produce Herefordshire Now- the quarterly resident magazine from Herefordshire Council which provides news and information on services, activities and campaigns and is distributed to households.

## **Resources**

The corporate peer challenge outlined the need for a clear 'Herefordshire' narrative and a USP for the county. It also identified the need for the council to be proactive in communicating a vision for the county and to celebrate the good work it does, and what it has achieved, as it 'punches above its weight'. The LGA Communications Healthcheck in 2020 also identified the need for the strategic narrative, a corporate communications plan and a more proactive, campaign-based approach.

In response, the Communications Strategy 2022-2025 reflects the Government's Modern Communications Operating Model 2.0 approach to Communications. This identifies communication as one of the five main levers of government alongside legislation, regulation, taxation and spending. When done well, its contribution to delivering government policies is profound. This is supported by the Communication Plan, which sets out the priority campaigns and activities for the corporate Communication Team.

The Communications function will focus across four key areas as part of its CORE service:

- C Changing behaviours for the benefit of society
- O Operational effectiveness of local public services
- R Reputation of Herefordshire Council and responding in times of a crisis
- E Explanation of council policies and projects

Our communication practices need to constantly evolve, anticipate and keep pace with technological change, they need to be audience-focused and should demonstrate our effectiveness. This approach provides four disciplines with strategic communications at

the core- Media, Marketing, Internal Communications and External Affairs (Engagement). Strategic communication underpins each discipline and the service as a whole.

Within the core disciplines, our approach is supported by a number of professional practices that should be consistently applied including campaign-led approaches and the Government's OASIS (Objective, Audience insight, Strategy, Implementation, Scoring) communication plan template. While our professional communicators may have a primary specialism in one discipline (such as media, internal communications) and may also have advanced specialist skills (for example those working in insight and evaluation, design and digital roles), they should all seek to develop capability in all disciplines. An annual skills survey will help support technological changes, develop skills and drive continuous professional development within the team.

The current engagement approach is devolved to services and there are opportunities for services to align and improve the way in which we engage with our residents and stakeholders. We will develop and deliver a consistent digital-first approach to engaging with our stakeholders and ensure consistent messaging to our communities through these channels. A monthly meeting of engagement colleagues led by the Communications Team will inform and engage colleagues to ensure a joined-up approach and consistent messaging.

Delivering this strategy will call for dedicated time from the Communications Team, and workloads will be prioritised to support the development and delivery of campaigns supporting the strategy. This will only be adjusted in times of crisis when emergency communications are required e.g. global/national/ local emergency response, death of a member of the Royal family.

## **Links and interdependencies**

**Communication plan** - Outlines the campaign programme for the communications team and prioritises key campaigns and initiatives



**Communication protocols and principles** - provide guidance and support to Members and staff on their role and responsibility to deliver good communications effectively

**Individual communications plans and action plans** supporting key priorities for strategic projects and activities, aligned with the organisational communications plan. Some of these are already adopted and some are still emerging. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Workforce Communication Strategy
- Children's Improvement Communications Strategy
- Climate and Ecological Emergency Communications Strategy
- Talk Community Communications Strategy
- Active Travel Communications Strategy
- Herefordshire place-based communications strategy
- Economic Development Communications Strategy ('Big Plan')
- Climate Communications Strategy (in partnership)
- Tourism Communications Strategy (in partnership)

### **Insight & Evaluation**

All major campaigns and initiatives will be evaluated. We will use this to understand what works well and to identify areas we need to address, supporting an environment of continuous improvement across all our communications. A quarterly summary of activity will be shared with senior and political leadership, when the key messages will also be reviewed and updated.

A 'Who reads what' survey will be undertaken to understand the communication preferences of the community and to inform future campaign delivery. This will be undertaken every three years, to account for changes in communication technology.

### **Appendix:**

Communications protocols and principles



## Communications protocols and principles

### Contents

Communications protocols and principles .....	1
1 Introduction and objectives .....	2
2 Scope .....	3
3 Protocols for members .....	4
4 Committees .....	5
5 Protocols for employees .....	6
6 Media Protocols.....	11
7 Legal framework and political dimension .....	13
8 Social media.....	15
9 Elections .....	17
10 Advertising and Sponsorship .....	18

## **1 Introduction and objectives**

**1.1.** Good communication and engagement creates a positive experience for those who interact with the council. It helps residents, employees, partners, and the media understand Herefordshire Council's objectives, values, services, challenges and achievements. Through efficient and effective communication, the council will improve local engagement and understanding. These protocols form part of the code of conduct for employees and elected members. They have been developed to support and govern all communications and engagement activity within Herefordshire Council, including press relations and social media approach.

**1.2.** The objectives of the protocols and principles are:

- To establish, promote and embed effective working protocols to govern and guide the way Herefordshire Council communicates and engages with a range of stakeholders.
- Present a professional, co-ordinated and consistent approach that is resident-focused
- Provide guidance for all employees and members to mitigate risk and promote council services and activity.

**1.3.** The Communications Team aims to provide guidance and leadership on communications and engagement activity. It will take responsibility for promoting and monitoring the communications protocols and principles, including highlighting instances when the protocols have not been observed and provide evidence to monitor the impact, which may include supporting any resulting investigation or disciplinary procedure.

## 2 Scope

2.1 Protocols apply to any Herefordshire Council communication, including: Press releases and statements to the media

- Digital content including web copy, visual/ audio content and social media
- Any communication or document prepared by Herefordshire Council services for public consumption, including advertising, leaflets, newsletters, reports, posters, banners, flyers or websites
- Any document or publicity which Herefordshire Council is associated with. Even if the publication is produced in partnership or is a joint document then the communications protocols and brand guidelines still apply
- Any publication or work prepared for the public domain, by consultants or contractors when working on behalf of Herefordshire Council
- Internal communications to staff and partners.

2.2 Protocols apply to everyone who works for Herefordshire Council in any capacity, or who represent the organisation in some way, including:

- Members
- Employees within the organisation, including those employed on an agency, freelance or consultant basis
- Volunteers working with council service teams
- Partners, providers and suppliers (including contracted or commissioned services) that may want to refer to Herefordshire Council in publicity material.

2.3 Employees should refer to the communications page on the intranet for other communication resources which includes the communications strategy, brand guidelines, style guide and templates.

### 3 Protocols for members

See also section 7 Legal framework and political dimension and section 9 Elections.

- 3.1 It is important members are supported and confident in communicating council processes, priorities, services and decisions. However, there is often a need for elected members to distinguish between when they represent Herefordshire Council in the press, on social media, and in public or when they are representing their personal views, those of their political group, or those of other groups of which they are members. Members should also have regard to the member code of conduct and the protocol on use of council resources by members when acting in any capacity as a member of the council. To assist in clarifying roles:
- The Leader of the council - on combined portfolio and/or high profile issues
  - Cabinet Member– on subjects relevant to their portfolio including policy and decision making
  - The Chair of the Council - on civic matters
  - Chair of any committee– on the business of the committee (see later)
  - Ward Member – on issues specific to their ward or representing their ward’s views
  - Group Leader – giving the views of their group
  - Individual members of the council – may express a personal view but should not speak on behalf of the council other than as above. If they are making representations on behalf of constituents or communities they should make clear that this is the case.
- 3.3 When members are representing the council and commenting on strategic or operational matters, they should work with the communications team to deliver a full and accurate response. Members should, in the first instance, use the relevant processes or channels for raising any concerns or complaints they may have about policy direction (with the relevant Cabinet Member) or operational matters (with the Chief Executive or relevant Director) before making any comment externally or to the Press, to ensure their comments are fully informed and accurate.
- 3.4 To provide the most effective communications support, and to support compliance with the protocol on use of council resources and the code of conduct, a member should not issue a press release, statement, letter for publication, or organise a press conference on behalf of Herefordshire Council, without notifying the communications team in advance. Political groups will have their own arrangements for issuing communications on behalf of their group. Members wishing to make comment as individuals are not required to notify the communications team in advance, but should ensure it is clear they are making such comment in a personal capacity.
- 3.5 If a member is contacted directly by a local or national journalist and asked to speak on behalf of Herefordshire Council, they should refer the journalist to the communications team. If this is not possible, and they are an official spokesperson (as defined in 3.1 above) they should advise the communications team and, if required, provide the statement issued to the press. For specific high profile media issues relating to members’ wards, members are able to refer to the communications team for support. This helps ensure consistency and accuracy.
- 3.6 Members should be aware of the legal framework and political dimension relating to communication as covered in point 6 of this document.
- 3.7 Appointees to outside bodies should refer to the body’s own communications protocols. Statements or queries about Herefordshire Council’s approach to the outside body should be directed to the appropriate Cabinet Member.

## **4 Committees**

4.1 Committees have a vital part to play in the effective running of the council, monitoring decisions and making recommendations to the cabinet and the authority as a whole. The chairperson of a committee may initiate, with the communications team, press releases or statements on matters determined by the committee. The chairperson will be the designated press spokesperson and they will be quoted or featured in publicity such as press releases and photo calls, representing the views of the committee, but not their own personal or political party views. The communications team will support the chairperson to issue press releases and statements on reports, liaising with the key spokesperson for comment and relevant officers for factual information. At the beginning of a scrutiny review, consideration will be given by the chairperson of the reviewing body to the issuing of a press release. Where appropriate, a press release can be issued before the committee meeting in order to promote interest and understanding of the issues (although the decision of the committee must not be anticipated). All enquiries from the media relating to any scrutiny review or committee agenda item will be handled by the communications team and discussed with the chairperson before a response is given. Press releases issued after a meeting must reflect the majority view of the committee and a range of members will be consulted on content, by the chairperson and the communications team.

## 5 Protocols for employees

### 5.1 Working within the Council

These guidelines provide the protocols and principles for day-to-day communication activities for the council. Individuals and service areas can seek advice from the communications team on a wide range of issues. The following section provides an overview on day-to-day protocols for the following areas, more information on specific topics can be found in other chapters in this document:

- Expectations and requirements when working with the press & media
- The use of social media
- Updating Herefordshire Council and other corporate websites
- Guidance and requirements for working with partners
- Help to promote consultations
- Internal communication
- Guidance on advertising and sponsorship

### 5.2 Working with the media

*For the full protocols on working with the media, see section 7 'Working protocols for communications team and the media'.*

- 5.2.1 Only employees who have received media training and communications team support and permission should act as official spokespeople. The process of 'senior suitable' will apply and the Communications Team will provide guidance on the most appropriate person to speak to the media on behalf of Herefordshire Council.
- 5.2.2 Service areas should notify the Communications Team well in advance of positive or negative issues that may be of press interest. Statements or press releases can be prepared by the Communications Team in advance of enquiries, to help protect the reputation of the service and the organisation.
- 5.2.3 Employees of Herefordshire Council may be asked by the Communications Team to respond quickly to media requests for interviews or background operational information. Those approached by the Communications Team will receive an email from [pressoffice@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@herefordshire.gov.uk) and should respond to this email within 24 hours, so that press deadlines are met and that the reputation of the service and the organisation is protected.
- 5.2.4 All approaches by the media should be directed to the Communications Team. If an employee is contacted directly by a local or national journalist, the employee must observe the following process:
- Advise the journalist to contact the Communications Team in the first instance (by calling 01432 260006 or email [pressoffice@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@herefordshire.gov.uk)) or offer to transfer their call.
  - Take the name of the journalist, the publication they represent and their telephone number
  - Notify the communications team immediately if the call is not transferred and provide the journalist's contact details
  - The Communications Team will follow up with the journalist directly and identify the most suitable person to respond to the request.
- 5.2.5 Approved spokespeople may be approached directly by the press at meetings or events and may need to respond immediately to direct questions. The Communications Team should be involved well before a meeting or event, to help provide expected media questions and help formulate draft responses. A Communications Team representative



may choose to attend/ join events that may be high profile for media coverage

- 5.2.6 The Communications Team should be made aware as soon as possible when a statement has been made to the Media, especially if outside of the agreed protocols.

### 5.3 Social media

*For the full protocols on social media, see section 8 'Protocols for social media'.*

- 5.3.1 The employee code of conduct applies both online and offline. An employee must not bring the council into disrepute via their social media activity (either as part of or outside of work). Failure to adhere to the code of conduct may result in disciplinary procedures.
- 5.3.2 No individual or service area may undertake a social media account as representing a service area or representing as Herefordshire Council, without prior agreement from the Communications Team.
- 5.3.3 Service areas that wish to manage a social media account will need to submit: A business case; background information; a commitment to the best practice guide for social media community management; and a commitment to mandatory training to help support the application. These will be reviewed and determined jointly by the Communications Team and Information Governance team.
- 5.3.4 A list of approved social media community managers will be maintained by the Communications Team. Performance reviews of individual channels will be reviewed periodically to ensure return on investment for employee time and to manage reputational risk.
- 5.3.5 Employees of Herefordshire Council will often be asked by the Communications Team to respond quickly to social media queries (as a customer service channel). Those asked by the communications team to assist in responding to social media enquiries should do so promptly.
- 5.3.6 Management of corporate social media accounts will be monitored by the communications team. Any employee's access to platforms or services may be suspended as part of a performance management or disciplinary process.

### 5.4 Websites

- 5.4.1 All content should adhere to the brand guidelines and style guide. All copy should be in clear English and avoid the use of jargon. All images should be cleared with the communications team and if possible, be locally relevant.
- 5.4.2 All website content will comply with the accessibility requirements of the [Public Sector Accessibility regulations 2020](#) and [WCAG2.1](#), and where this isn't possible an explanation or alternative will be offered – full details are in the [online accessibility statement](#)
- 5.4.3 Services are responsible for checking the accuracy and relevance of their web pages monthly to ensure content is current and correct. The web team are responsible for ensuring all web content is useful and useable.
- 5.4.4 All websites should feature google analytics to allow accurate reporting and insight. The Head of Communications will monitor analytics to ensure sufficient engagement and promotion, demonstrating return on investment and mitigating reputational risk.
- 5.4.5 When necessary, and with support from the Communications Team, services may produce dedicated websites to help support a sub-brand, service or business outcomes. A clear business case and objectives should be provided when working with the

Communications Team to ensure on potential return on investment of funding and officer time, and to mitigate reputational risk.

## **5.5 Working with partners, contractors and commissioned services**

- 5.5.1 Herefordshire Council will work closely with multi-agency partners, strategic partnerships and other independent groups and organisations to ensure effective strategic and operational communications.
- 5.5.2 The Communications Team will attend strategic communications meetings with officers managing key partnerships, and sometimes key partners, to assist in the identification and dissemination of key messages and communications.
- 5.5.3 If Herefordshire Council branding or sub-branding is to be used by third parties, branded materials should be referred to the communications team to ensure proper and consistent representation.
- 5.5.4 The Communications Team can provide assistance to individual council-maintained schools on sensitive and contentious communications issues. If a school is contacted by the media, they should liaise with the council's Communications Team prior to responding.

## **5.6 Consultations**

- 5.6.1 All consultations will be conducted using the corporate approach, with data insight and advice from the Strategic Intelligence Team or a suitable external agency. The Communications Team should be informed at an early stage to help support the proactive and scheduled corporate promotion of the consultation.
- 5.6.2 Herefordshire Council will adhere to the government consultation principles - a set of principles to be more effective in consulting the public and to help avoid consultation fatigue. This will include sufficient online feedback on the results of consultations.
- 5.6.3 Digital engagement methods that allow a supportive user experience should be employed to make it easier for the public to contribute and feed in their views, using clear language in plain English and compliance with the accessibility requirements of WCAG2.1 and the Public Sector Accessibility Regulations.

## **5.7 Internal Communications**

- 5.7.1 The Communications Team will lead internal communication channels, strategic messaging and the flow of information to help employees of Herefordshire Council become natural ambassadors and advocates for the council's vision and work.
- 5.7.2 The Communications Team will manage promotional opportunities both online and offline, working with services as well as partners, providers and contractors to ensure the correct and appropriate representation and messaging to ensure maximum impact, and the efficiency and effectiveness of all communications.
- 5.7.3 The Communications Team work to a dedicated internal communications campaigns to provide staff with support and information that are co-ordinated with the council's external communications campaigns.

## 5.8 Campaigns

- 5.8.1 The Communications Team will be responsible for the delivery of corporate campaigns. These will be developed to align with the key themes within the county plan and relevant services will be asked to provide supporting information to help deliver the campaign such as case studies, service information, and social media content.
- 5.8.2 The Head of Communications will agree and co-ordinate the campaign plan, and proactive communications will be structured to fit within the plan according to the council's key themes and priorities.

## 5.9 Advertising and Sponsorship

*For the full protocols on advertising and sponsorship, see section 10 'Advertising and Sponsorship'.*

- 5.9.1 The council can place advertisements where it will support audience reach. This might include paid-for advertising with third parties, as well as promotion on council property, vehicles, publications or other council assets, or those belonging to contracted or commissioned services. This should follow the principles of value for money where spend on advertising creates a direct return based on:
- The advert being the best method of reaching an audience for a defined purpose
  - As part of a combination of communication activities that has a target audience in mind
  - That the placing of adverts does not bring the authority into disrepute by association
  - That the style and content within adverts is cleared by the communications team
- 5.9.2 Herefordshire Council or a council sub-brand may use sponsorship as a method of communication and promotion. Where an activity or event is sponsored by the council this will be on the basis:
- A relevant organisation and service linked to specific campaigns and priorities
  - A political organisation or political association will not be sponsored
  - The sponsorship arrangements should be approved by the communication team to ensure it does not bring the council into disrepute
  - A sponsorship arrangement needs to ensure this does not constitute endorsement of the associated products or business
  - The service will need to check that there are no disputes outstanding with the company being sponsored.

*For the full protocols on advertising and sponsorship, see section 10 'Advertising and Sponsorship'.*

## 6 Media Protocols

6.1 The Communications Team will lead on the training and co-ordination of designated spokespeople (employees and members). The training will be updated and refreshed annually.

6.2 The following should apply as leading spokespeople:

- The Leader of the Council - on combined portfolio and/or high profile issues
- Cabinet Member – on subjects relevant to their portfolio including policy and decision making
- The Chairperson of the Council - on civic matters
- Chairperson of any committee – on the business of the committee (see later)
- Ward Member – on issues specific to their ward
- Group Leader – giving the views of their group
- Chief Executive – on election or electoral registration issues or overview of the operation of the council
- Director and Assistant Director on service operational issues
- Manager or officer who has received training via the communications team (within the last 12 months) specifically relating to a service issue.

6.3 All local, national and trade or professional press calls should be directed to the communications team on 01432 260006 or emailed to [pressoffice@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@herefordshire.gov.uk)

6.4 The communications team will liaise with the journalist, maintain contact, liaise with service and identify suitable experts within Herefordshire Council, support spokespeople to make the best use of each opportunity to present the position of the council accurately, within tight deadlines. Although every effort will be made to meet media deadlines, the deadline should not be allowed to compromise the accuracy of the response.

6.5 Those approached by the Communications Team will receive an email from [pressoffice@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@herefordshire.gov.uk) and should respond to this email within 24 hours, so that press deadlines are met and that the reputation of the service and the organisation is protected. The Communications Team will log media enquiries and response times.

6.6 Where opportunities to pro-actively promote the council's work are identified the Communications Team will act as media liaison and identify the suitable spokesperson.

6.7 If Herefordshire Council discovers that it may be at fault in terms of the operation or delivery of its services or its internal processes, then it will, according to protocol and supported by the Communications Team, proactively tell the press and the public what has gone wrong and what it will do to put it right.

6.8 The value of integrity will be maintained. There are matters where Herefordshire Council should properly respect confidentiality, particularly where it has a duty of care, for example to service- users, employees, or elected members. In this instance, the council will decline to comment on matters raised by the Press.

6.9 Herefordshire Council will not discuss individual cases relating to personal health, social care issues, individual employment matters, or where there is an ongoing legal process/ombudsman investigation in, or with, the media. There may be other instances where information is withheld due to its commercial sensitivity. Where we are limited in what can be said to the media, we will aim to provide a reason why.

- 6.10 Herefordshire Council will not comment on information provided to the press anonymously or comment on quotes that will not be attributed. These anonymous comments can be inaccurate or malicious.
- 6.11 If the media is materially inaccurate in its reportage, the Communications Team will seek to correct misinformation, working with the publication or programme to seek a correction and a proportionate response.
- 6.12 Herefordshire Council will make committee meetings open to the press, encourage journalists to attend and offer good facilities for reporting these meetings. If previous media comment or reportage is discussed in public meetings, it should only help establish the facts and not overtly criticise members of the press.
- 6.13 The press are not permitted to enter restricted areas of Herefordshire Council premises or contracted service areas/ premises, unless officially invited to do so by a Director or a member of the Communications Team.
- 6.14 The Communications Team will always try to ensure that employees receive information that affects them as employees before they read about it in the media.
- 6.15 Herefordshire Council will operate a corporate approach to press relations. News releases and statements will be issued by the communications team and where suitable, posted to the Herefordshire Council website.
- 6.16 It is expected that the Media respect embargoed press releases, which will be clearly marked as embargoed with the date and time by which the release can be published.
- 6.17 Media queries will only be processed from official, regulated news channels. All general enquiries from social media channels and blogs will be treated as a customer enquiry and referred to the relevant service and/or through the FOI process.
- 6.18 Press releases and statements will include contact details of the Communications Officer who will co-ordinate the information and provide a response service to enquiries.
- 6.19 When responding to incoming media requests for interview on key media issues, designated spokespeople should, as far as is possible, make themselves available for interviews if required via the Communications Team.
- 6.20 Press releases containing financial or legal information will be checked by the designated finance or legal officer or a suitable senior manager. Press releases dependent on statistical information will be checked with the Strategic Intelligence Team to ensure the information is used accurately and objectively.
- 6.21 Directors will be offered the opportunity to approve key press releases (or if this is not possible for any reason, such as leave or being unobtainable before the press deadline, an alternative 'senior suitable' spokesperson will be consulted). The Head of Communications will approve all releases and maintain quality control on all press releases issued by the communications team.
- 6.22 When strategic partners (such as Balfour Beatty Living Places, Wye Valley Trust etc.) are featured or participating in a press release, then that partner will be consulted on content before release. Press releases will be shared in draft between partners and approved as with council press releases. Partners will be asked to agree in advance the method, manner and

timing of press releases. All strategic partners will receive a copy of finalised releases that may interest or refer to them.

6.23 The Communications Team will follow pre-election guidance and provide support to services to ensure communications comply with the guidance preceding elections. More information can be found in section 8 of this document 'Elections'.

6.24 The Communications Team will advise, support and monitor corporate communications for accessibility. The Communications Team will check the reading age of supplied text and ensure plain language is used in all promotional material, to help avoid jargon and technical language within corporate and service communications.

## **7 Legal framework and political dimension**

*For more information, please see section 9- Elections*

7.1.1 A strict legal framework binds publicity or public statements issued by the council, which must operate within the *Local Government Act (1986)* and *The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Government Publicity*.

7.1.2 The code defines the main functions of local authority publicity as follows: "To increase public awareness of the services provided by the authority and the functions it performs; to allow local people a real and informed say about issues that affect them; to explain to electors and ratepayers the reasons for particular policies and priorities, and in general to improve local accountability."

7.1.3 The code covers the full range of publicity, including where it is used to comment on issues which are controversial, or where there are arguments for or against the views or policies of the council. The code states these issues should be handled with particular care and presented as clearly, fairly and as simply as possible.

7.1.4 The code states that where publicity is used to comment on the policies of central government, other local authorities or other public bodies, it should be 'objective, balanced, informative and accurate'. It should aim to set out the reasons for the council's views and should not be prejudiced, unreasoning or form a political attack on the policies or proposals in question or on the people putting them forward.

7.1.5 The code describes council leaflets or newsletters that are delivered unsolicited to all households as "inevitably more intrusive" than publicity available on application to the council, and states that particular care is required when drafting this kind of material. The code states that 'council publicity should never attack or appear to undermine generally accepted moral standards'. The codes of conduct for members and officers are also relevant.

7.1.6 The attribution of marketing, promotional and advertising materials that reach the public unsolicited should be clearly laid out. It should be clear that the council is responsible for the event or service, so the correct inclusion of the council's corporate branding is a prerequisite.

7.1.7 Publicity campaigns are appropriate in most circumstances. They can form part of consultation processes where local views are being sought, promote the effective and efficient use of local services and facilities, or influence public behaviour or attitudes on such matters as health, safety, crime prevention or equal opportunities. Publicity

campaigns can provide an appropriate means of ensuring that the local community is properly informed about a matter relating to a function of the local authority and about the authority's policies in relation to that function and the reasons for them. Local authorities, like other public authorities, should not use public funds to mount publicity campaigns whose primary purpose is to persuade the public to hold a particular view on a question of policy.

- 7.1.8 When the council is negotiating a commercial transaction, officers or elected members will not weaken the council's position by disclosing it publicly or to the press. To do so would compromise a number of statutory obligations including the duty of care we have to council tax payers who rightly expect the council to protect its financial position. In these circumstances only the communications team, working with legal services, will talk to the press.
- 7.1.9 Employees or members must not betray the council's duty of care. Only the Communications Team, working with legal services, will talk to the press on issues in these circumstances. If this is not observed, it may result in disciplinary action in the case of officers, and a code of conduct investigation in the case of members. If an employee is subject to allegations or a disciplinary matter, the council will, or make arrangements to, investigate fully and fairly. If this involves suspension, this does not imply guilt. Only the communications team, working with legal services, will respond to press interest in these circumstances.
- 7.1.10 Case law has established that the public interest, and what interests the public, is not the same thing. The council has a duty to act in the public interest. The press may often be concerned with what interests the public. When these are in conflict, the council will always act in the public interest
- 7.1.11 Elected members have obligations both individually and collectively. If they breach the requirements of the *Members Code of Conduct* – for example by 'leaking' confidential information to the press or by bringing the council into disrepute – this may lead to referral to the council's monitoring officer, who will deal with the complaint.
- 7.1.12 There is a general prohibition on local authorities producing "party political publicity". Section 2 of the Local Government Act (1988) prohibits local authorities publishing any material which in whole, or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party. Also councils should never use advertising as a means of giving financial support to any publication that could be associated with a political party. Publicity should reflect the tradition of a politically -impartial service, and the fact that local authority staff are expected to serve the authority as a whole, whatever its composition from time to time.
- 7.1.13 A Communications Officer will be assigned to cover the activities of the cabinet and full council, attending each meeting and offering communications advice as well as planning and agreeing press releases.
- 7.1.14 The Communications Team will aim to ensure that the release of news to the media at least accompanies the distribution of papers for meetings where there is likely to be press interest.
- 7.1.15 Publicity about individual members may include the contact details, the positions they hold in the council (for example, member of the cabinet) and their responsibilities. All publicity should be approved by the member prior to release. Publicity may include information about individual members' proposals, decisions and recommendations only where this is



relevant to their position and responsibilities within the council. All such publicity should be objective and explanatory, and whilst it may acknowledge the part played by individual members as holders of particular positions in the council, personalisation of issues or personal image making should be avoided.

7.1.16 Whilst it may be appropriate to describe policies put forward by an individual councillor which are relevant to her/his position and responsibilities within the council, and to put forward her/his justification in defence of them, this should not be done in party political terms, using political slogans, expressly advocating policies of those of a particular political party or directly attacking policies and opinions of other parties, groups or individuals.

7.1.17 The Communications Team will seek legal clearance where appropriate for any issues that may be contentious, subject to a legal dispute, or part of a regulatory process.

## **8 Social media**

8.1 The Communications Team will maintain a list of approved Community Managers and the social media channel they are responsible for. A full audit and on-going regulation will be implemented to help ensure the quality of information and to mitigate risk. Only those who have completed training on the approved social media channel may communicate on behalf of the council.

8.2 No individual or service area may undertake a social media account as representing a service area of or representing as Herefordshire Council, without prior agreement and briefing from the Communications Team.

8.3 The Communications Team will monitor corporate social media channels and if a question or an issue is raised by the public that Herefordshire Council should answer, then the Communications Team will work with the appropriate service area to facilitate a response.

8.4 Service areas that wish to manage a social media account will need to submit: A business case; background information; and a commitment to the best practice guide for social media community management to help support the application. There will also need to be resource committed to regular management and monitoring of the account, to ensure there is no reputational impact on the council or its services. These will be reviewed and determined jointly by the communications team and information governance team. Accounts managed by partners are subject to the same quality assurance.

8.5 Service areas that are successful in their application for a service-level social media account will be subject to mandatory annual refresher training organised by the communication team.

8.6 The Communications Team and all social media managers will use plain language and avoid jargon and technical language.

8.7 Herefordshire Council may not comment on information on social media that is deemed to be posted anonymously.

8.8 Usage of social media accounts will be monitored by the communications team. Any individual's access to specific platforms or services may be suspended as part of a performance management or disciplinary process. Reference is made to the employee code of conduct, which also applies to online. Accounts managed by partners are subject to the same quality assurance.

8.9 An employee must not bring the council into disrepute via their social media activity (part of or outside of work).

## 9 Elections

9.1 Communications during the run-up to elections may be particularly sensitive and there are restrictions contained within the Code of Conduct on Local Publicity. To ensure the continued political impartiality of Herefordshire Council the restrictions on communications apply also to national elections. The same extent of control does not apply to by-elections. Subject to compliance with the code of conduct, publicity about individual members who are not involved in the by-election is permitted (although great care should be taken in the managing of local issues that could be influential in a by-election).

9.2 The period of restriction in question usually relates to the day when formal notice of a local or national election is given, up to and including the day of the election – this is known as the pre-election period and guidance is issued by the council on each occasion and published on the councils' website.

9.3 Any local authority is prohibited from publishing any material that appears to be designed to affect support, positively or negatively, for a political party.

9.4 Careful consideration should be given to the style, content, timing of material and the likely effect it will have on the audience. Material is prohibited if:

- It refers to a political party of a person identified with a political party
- It promotes or opposes a point of view on a question of political debate or controversy
- It supports a view or issue identifiable as the view of one political party and not of another
- It identifies with individual elected members or groups of members
- It is part of a campaign associated with a political view
- It contains quotes from politicians outside of the council, such as members of parliament, who are clearly identified as part of a political party.

9.5 Consideration also applies to proactive events, organised by Herefordshire Council which should not involve elected members or political candidates during this period.

9.6 During the run up to a local or national election, communications and marketing can continue as follows:

- It is acceptable for the Communications Team, on behalf of the council, to distribute press releases and respond to legitimate service enquiries provided the content is factual and not party political. The safest option is for press releases not to quote elected members during this period and particularly not members or individuals standing for election.
- It is admissible for elected members of the council holding key positions to comment in an emergency or where there is a genuine need for a member level response to an important event outside the authority's control.

9.7 Publications can continue as long as content is neutral and takes account of the restrictions outlined above. Sometimes long lead-in times associated with such publications can pose an extra challenge. It should be remembered that it is the time of publication, not the time when the content is drafted, that is most crucial.

9.8 Electronic communication also comes into scope. Any material posted on social media, intranet or website during the period is subject to restrictions.

9.9 Consultation should not be undertaken on issues that could be seen as politically sensitive.

9.10 All these restrictions apply to other organisations that receive local authority funding and officers should check with community groups they fund and with third sector organisations that may be planning publicity around election time.

9.11 In general the question to ask of all publications, documents or events is; 'can it wait?' And if not, 'will the subject matter be regarded as influential on voting behaviour?' This will be the case with controversial subjects and needs to be avoided altogether.

9.12 If an elected member asks an employee of the council to publish something that the employee considers to be inappropriate or is against communications protocols, the concerns need to be raised with legal services and the Communications Team. If something cannot be distributed as a member has suggested then the employee should explain why and offer an alternative form of words. Guidance and support is available from the Communications Team.

9.13 If the document has a high corporate profile or deals with a strategic issue then the Chief Executive or a Director should clear the final version.

## **10 Advertising and Sponsorship**

10.1 The Communications Team will be responsible for the management of corporate advertising and identifying and measuring the opportunity set against the risk. All advertising should ensure compliance with legislation, advertising industry codes and other council policies (for further details visit [www.asa.org.uk/asa/codes](http://www.asa.org.uk/asa/codes)). A third party may advertise with Herefordshire Council or sponsor a particular campaign, event or asset. Opportunities should be suitably advertised so that other providers have an equal opportunity to provide support. In that instance this should consider:

- Upholding the council's reputation and corporate identity
- Link to the council's priorities
- Secure best value for money and maximise income
- Safeguard the image and environment of the county.

10.2 The council will accept advertising and sponsorship on its own platforms that supports its priorities.

10.3 The council will not permit any advertising or sponsorship that represents a conflict of interest or is likely to cause serious or widespread offence. Particular care should be taken to avoid causing offence on the grounds of race, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability. Content that is not permitted for advertising includes, but is not limited to, advertising that contains, infers or suggests any of the following:

- Advocacy of, or opposition to, any politically, environmentally or socially controversial subjects or issues
- Disparagement or promotion of any person or class of persons
- Promotion or incitement of illegal, violent or socially undesirable acts
- Promotion or availability of tobacco products, weapons, gambling or illegal drugs
- Advertising of financial organisations and loan advancers with punitive interest rates
- Promotion or availability of adult or sexually orientated entertainment materials
- Advertising that infringes on any trademark, copyright or patent rights of another company
- Claims or representations in violation of advertising or consumer protection laws
- Promotion of any political party.

- 10.4 The council abides by the Town and Country Planning Act. The control of Advertisements Regulations provides rules on displaying advertising. The council has the duty to ensure all advertising on council owned platforms falls within this legislation and will liaise with the appropriate authority/district council to ensure planning law relating to the display of advertisements is complied with.
- 10.5 The council will advertise its own services and offers as appropriate using its own platforms. This may include adverts relating to traded services or services which generate an income, or linked to a campaign. These should be identified and reviewed in collaboration with the communications team.
- 10.6 The council holds personal data of service users and careful consideration needs to be given to whether it is appropriate and legal (General Data Protection Regulations) for this to be used for any advertising or direct marketing purposes. All audiences should be asked whether they are willing to 'opt in' to receive news, information or advertising messages from the council when personal data is gathered. More guidance is available from the Access to Information team.
- 10.7 All advertising and sponsorship agreements should be recorded in the contracts register.
- 10.8 Advertising and sponsorship is not a way for any company or organisation to be viewed favourably by the council in any other business arrangements they might be a party to. Herefordshire Council will monitor and publish all information on advertising and sponsorship opportunities and income.
- 10.9 The council can place advertisements where it will support audience reach. This might include paid-for advertising with third parties, as well as promotion on council property, vehicles, publications or other council assets, or on those belonging to contracted or commissioned services. However, any such advertising must be conducted in line with the principles set out in section 10.1 above.
- 10.10 Herefordshire Council or a council sub-brand may use sponsorship as a method of communication and promotion for an event or activity. Where an activity or event is sponsored by the council this will be in line with the advertising principles set out in section 10.1 above. In addition, to this, the Council reserves the right to verify that the sponsorship complies with the following principles:
- Originates from a relevant organisation or service linked to specific campaigns and priorities
  - Does not result in sponsoring or promoting any political organisation or political association
  - The sponsorship arrangements will be approved by the communication team to ensure it does not bring the council into disrepute
  - A sponsorship arrangement needs to ensure this does not constitute endorsement of the associated products or business
  - The service will need to check that there are no disputes outstanding with the company being sponsored

For further information on the topics within this document, please contact the Head of Communications.



<b>Channel received</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Response</b>
Email	Objectives	Ensure consistency across corporate approach and insert in objectives. Update corporate value to reflect the aim for excellence	There needs to be corporate consistency and this is incorporated into objectives. Updated corporate value to reflect comments
Email/verbal	Town & Parish Council communications	Recognise strength of parish/town councils and include in strategic approach. Ensure communications are not only city centric. Frustrations voiced regarding service response times and engagement with parish councils. More opportunity to use parish magazines for messaging. Members should have better visibility and oversight of parish council comms and inclusion at parish summit.	A dedicated engagement strategy will be developed to support the parish/town councils and ensure sufficient information and engagement, as an interdependent document.
Email/verbal	Planning visibility	Promotion on social channels of planning applications and content focused for parish council social media community pages and parish magazines.	As above, a dedicated strategy to provide parish councils with online and offline content that is easy to share and relevant to their community. The current planning web page enables anyone to sign up to alerts in their area, more promotion could be undertaken with key stakeholders.
Email	Managing expectation	We should manage the message to the community and be honest when things aren't achievable or realistic.	Reflected as part of wider objectives on feeling informed and understanding of council's role
Verbal	Plain English	Use clear and understandable language- don't speak in code.	Work will be undertaken to encourage culture change and behaviour change.
Verbal	Digitisation	The council should improve digital channels to allow for better services and to improve efficiency. The website should be clear and provide useful services to residents. Negative experience affects reputation.	A transformation programme is underway to improve the website functionality and to digitise services. Website content should be updated to provide a useful and useable experience for our residents.

Channel received	Theme	Description	Response
Verbal	Listening	The communications strategy should reflect the listening element of working with the community.	Sufficient engagement with stakeholders should be part of our corporate approach and culture. A range of tools are in development to support services and effective communication and engagement should be a standard approach as part of all of our work.
Verbal	Positive promotion	More positive news about Herefordshire should be shared	As part of the corporate campaign approach we are looking for ways to celebrate Herefordshire and share the great promotion as part of work such as tourism. This is reflected in our objective to develop pride in the county.
Verbal	Website	Website content should be more supportive, easier to search. Negative experience affects reputation.	There are planned improvements to the website search and content to ensure all content is useful, usable and customer-focused. There is further work to develop improved functionality and processes to keep content up to date and accurate will be included as part of this.
Verbal	Communication channels	Consideration should be given to ensure we support those who are not online or comfortable using digital channels. Services should be contactable by telephone. Herefordshire Now is a helpful resource for those not online	While we should provide an 'always on' positive digital experience for people who wish to engage and transact online, we should reserve our resource for those who do still need to engage personally. All our service contact details should be clearly available and supported.
Verbal	Pothole reporting system	Improvements should be made to the report a pothole process to allow for visibility and updates on progress. Negative experience affects reputation.	The vision is fully automated digital processes that give real time visibility to customers and services to help limit need for manual updates.



Channel received	Theme	Description	Response
Verbal	Partner/ Contractor communications	Quality assurance should be in place to ensure contractors and partners working on our behalf are aware of the commitment and need to communicate effectively.	Work will be undertaken to demonstrate communications strategy objectives and narrative and to ensure there are assurance processes in place with contractors and partners.
Verbal	Consultations	Consultations should be effective and targeted to the right audience, using the appropriate channels for them.	A corporate consultation approach should be observed by all services and sufficient engagement practices with stakeholders should be undertaken at the right time, in the right way.
Verbal	Service contacts	Councillors should have a list of key contacts to identify people as service representatives.	The website should be the first port of call for all customer support queries, as it allows information to be accessed by the public as well as councillors. It also provides opportunity for councillors to demonstrate where they found the information and share it more widely. Website content should be up-to-date, useful and useable to allow this to be quick and easy.
Verbal	Support for councillors	It is not clear what support is available for councillors or how to access it. This becomes more difficult when working remotely and less opportunity for peer support.	There should be easy and accessible information for councillors to access to help support them in their role. The improvements to intranet services should assist this, along with a more structured way of hybrid working. The weekly email from the Chief Executive provides a full round-up of weekly activity and more work will be done to understand what other information and assistance may be required.

